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Ultimate pulling power

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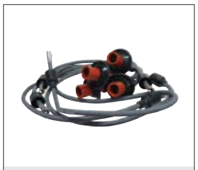

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VOLKS WORLD

The December issue goes on sale

Friday 17 November

Don’t miss it!

THE EDITOR

Editor Ian Cushway – volksworld.ed@kelsey.co.uk

Welcome to the mag

I'd promised the kids a camping weekend away in the Beetle so with a window of sunny weather forecast I found a suitably quiet site about an hour and a half away on the north coast of Brittany and started sorting out camping equipment. Six-man tent, airbeds, sleeping bags, pillows, stove, camping table, food. All of a sudden, there was a heck of a lot to fit in. The table and tent went under the bonnet, sleeping bags and everything else in the luggage compartment or between the two younger boys on the back seat. We were all set, and you could sense the excitement in the warm Saturday morning air as we gently pulled off the drive, my 15 year-old son, Charlie, at the wheel (in France you can drive accompanied from the age of 15½). But what was that horrible scraping noise and pungent smell of rubber? We pulled over to find out, only to discover the car was now so low at the front, the tyres were rubbing on the wings. A moment of panic, followed by a quick shift round of the seating arrangements, putting my youngest, lightest son in the front, gave us just enough clearance to carry on our expedition.

> “the car was now so low at the front, the tyres were rubbing on the wings”

All smiles before the off, and before the front tyres started rubbing…

All this lot went in the Beetle, but there wasn't room for much else

However, the first fuel stop proved almost as dramatic. The sender unit's still playing up, so paranoid about running out I filled the tank to the brim only to spot petrol spewing out all over the forecourt via an overflow pipe I'd rigged up from the front of the tank. Thankfully, the young woman on the pay booth remained surprisingly unruffled as she pointed to a pile of sand to put down over the rapidly expanding wet patch.

Anyway, we made it to the campsite, the sun stayed out all weekend and we had a fabulous time. The Beetle got a fair bit of attention on route, and the boys were particularly impressed when someone in a posh new Audi leant out of their window to get a photo on an iPhone. By our next trip, it's fair to say, I'll have swapped the 185 tyres at the front for something a little narrower and got the routing right for the fuel tank overflow pipe.

All this got me wondering how my folks coped when I was a nipper. The five of us in a '57 Oval, with all our camping gear, driving down to Italy in the mid-1960s. Apparently, I sat up front on my mum's lap for most of the journey, with my brother and sister perched on the five sleeping bags in the back, stuff under their feet and tinned beans (my parents never had the cash to eat out) neatly stored under the rear seat. I must confess, it makes our weekend jaunt look a little feeble…

Ian Cushway
Editor

This is how my folks did it in the '60s, complete with frame tent and thick picnic rug

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Get them in the diary

Here's a list of season openers to get your 2018 off to a flying start

January

Camper Mart
Date: 14 Jan 2018
Location: International Centre, Telford
Contact: www.campermart.co.uk

February

DubFreeze
Date: 17-18 Feb 2018
Location: Bingley Hall, Stafford
Contact: www.dubfreeze.co.uk

March

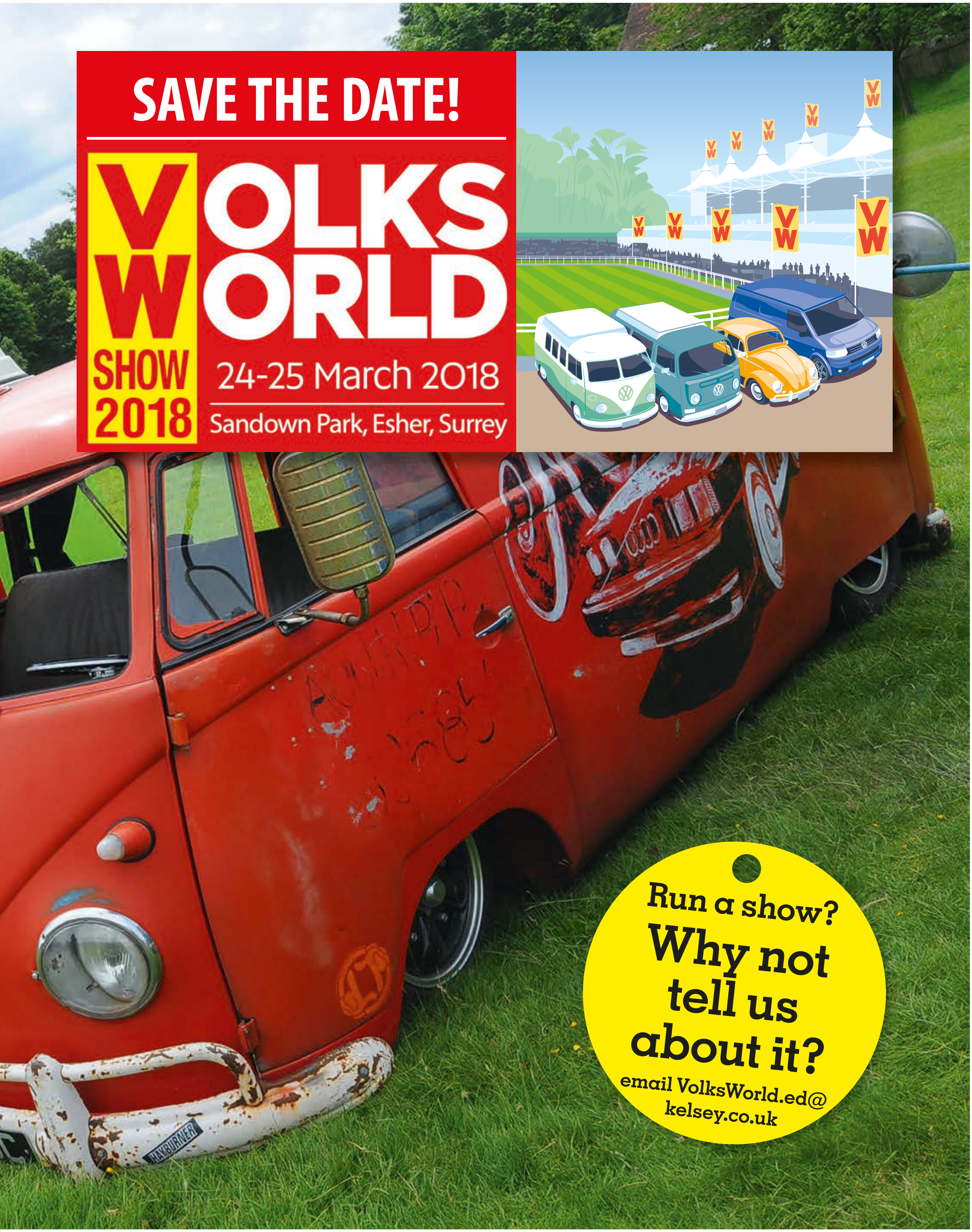
Dub Aid 6
Date: 16-18 March 2018
Location: Earls Barton, Northants
Contact: www.dubaid.co.uk

The *Volksworld* Show
Date: 24-25 Mar 2018
Location: Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey
Contact: www.volksworldshows.com

May

The Only Meet is Essex
Date: 4-7 May 2018
Location: Orsett Showground RM16 3JU
Contact: www.vw-tomie.co.uk

Vanwest
Date: 11-13 May 2018
Location: Brean Sands, Burnham-on-Sea, Somerset
Contact: www.vanwest.co.uk



SAVE THE DATE!

VOLKS WORLD SHOW 2018

24-25 March 2018

Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey

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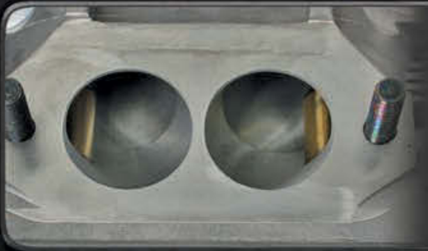
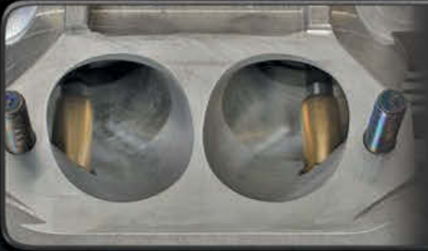


044™ CNC Super Mag

Std., 90.5/92 or 94 Bore with 40 x 35.5 valves

Great Cylinder Head for small displacement engines. Very small 61cc intake port with high port velocity, offering good low-end driveability on engines as small as 1600cc, yet still flows enough CFM to make 160+ horsepower on large N/A displacement engines.

Flow @ 25"	
.100" - 52 CFM	61cc Chamber Volume
.200" - 102 CFM	
.300" - 136 CFM	
.400" - 153 CFM	63cc Intake Port Volume
.500" - 161 CFM	
.600" - 169 CFM	

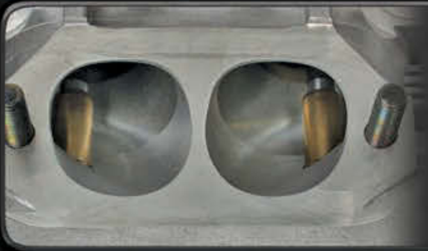


044™ CNC Ultra Mag Plus

90.5/92 or 94 Bore with 42 or 44 x 37.5 valves

Ideal head for 2000cc engines and larger. 75cc intake port allows for increased RPM potential, yet still small enough for good mid-range power. Capable of producing 190+ horsepower on N/A engines. Great head for turbo applications also.

Flow @ 25"	
.100" - 53 CFM	62cc Chamber Volume
.200" - 103 CFM	
.300" - 137 CFM	
.400" - 160 CFM	75cc Intake Port Volume
.500" - 177 CFM	
.600" - 190 CFM	



044™ CNC Mini Wedge

90.5/92 or 94 Bore with 43 x 37.5 valves

Slightly higher port volume than the CNC Ultra Mag, allowing for greater RPM and power potential. The Mini Wedge Port uses a 43mm intake valve and flows enough air to produce over 200HP on N/A engines. Also performs well on turbo applications.

Flow @ 25"	
.100" - 54 CFM	64cc Chamber Volume
.200" - 107 CFM	
.300" - 145 CFM	
.400" - 168 CFM	78cc Intake Port Volume
.500" - 189 CFM	
.600" - 204 CFM	

Find us on Social Media!

Check out a complete features list for our ALL NEW 044™ Cylinder Heads!

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See our Rottler 5-axis CNC machine in action on YouTube!

044™ CNC Wedge Port

90.5/92, 92 or 94 Bore with 42 or 44 x 37.5 valves

This is one of our favorite heads! The Wedge Port uses up to a 44mm intake valve. The small 76cc intake port flows 209 CFM and can produce well over 210 horsepower on N/A engines. Great head for hot street engines due to the high port velocity. A great head for turbo engines.

Flow @ 25"
.100" - 56 CFM
.200" - 117 CFM
.300" - 155 CFM
.400" - 184 CFM
.500" - 201 CFM
.600" - 209 CFM

67cc Chamber Volume

76cc Intake Port Volume

044™ CNC Super Pro

94 Bore with 45 x 37.5 valves

The Super Pro is a horsepower making machine! The larger 45mm intake flows an incredible 224 CFM, but still retains great port velocity with its 81cc intake port. This head produces huge horsepower on N/A engines. Great for hot street cars and bracket race cars.

Flow @ 25"
.100" - 58 CFM
.200" - 112 CFM
.300" - 156 CFM
.400" - 192 CFM
.500" - 210 CFM
.600" - 224 CFM

67cc Chamber Volume

81cc Intake Port Volume

044™ CNC Ultra Wedge

94 Bore with 46 x 37.5 valves

The GodFather of all CNC heads. Flowing over 230 CFM, it makes power most race-only heads are capable of! Larger 89cc intake ports allow for extremely high RPM potential & power levels exceeding 240 HP on N/A engines. Great for extremely hot street cars, and drag cars.

Flow @ 25"
.100" - 56 CFM
.200" - 110 CFM
.300" - 157 CFM
.400" - 194 CFM
.500" - 214 CFM
.600" - 229 CFM
.630" - 233 CFM

69cc Chamber Volume

89cc Intake Port Volume

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Buy a new project!

With the show season over and the nights closing in, what better way to while away those winter months than busying yourself with a new project?

But, before you start trawling the classifieds for a suitable candidate, it's worth taking a deep breath and having a mental checklist to avoid splashing out on the wrong vehicle.

Start by asking yourself, is it really what you are after? Don't buy a Bus if you wanted a Bug and don't take on a new project just because a mate's got bored with it or it's cheap.

A nut-and-bolt restoration is likely to become a labour of love, so before you take the plunge, do a few sums. Assess what needs doing, what parts you'll need, what work you can do yourself, and what work you'll need to farm out, to see if it's really worth it. Assuming there's not sentimental attachment (because it's difficult to put a price on that) it might be worth buying a pristine or already restored vehicle in the first place.

If you're taking on a vehicle that's in bits or half finished, find out what bits are missing. This is crucial, especially if you're buying something old and rare because often unfinished projects get scavenged of all the good bits and replacing them can prove a nightmare.

On a part finished project, or a car advertised as just needing a quick 'tidy up', find out what jobs have already been done. And if necessary, ask to see photos. So, for example, if a vendor says a Beetle floorpan has been worked on, enquire whether it's had new sections, a complete floorpan, or whether it's been done like a patchwork quilt. Likewise, if the engine of an unfinished project's been rebuilt, ask what new parts went in. Establish the quality of workmanship, because if it's been botched, you'll need to strip it down and do it all over again. And it's never as easy putting right previous wrongs at a later date.

^ Ensure you've got all the necessary paperwork to avoid headaches later

^ Make sure you know what you're taking on before buying your next project. Will it really be worth it?

Always enquire whether it's got any paperwork. Ask if the vehicle is in the seller's name and whether they've got a V5 to prove it. Buying a vehicle in bits without the proper documentation is a recipe for big headaches when you finally get it finished and attempt to get it registered. You can find out all you need to know here: www.gov.uk/vehicle-registration/overview.

> "often unfinished projects get scavenged of all the good bits"

Finally, do a quick list of pros and cons to ensure the positives of taking on the project you're considering outweighs the negatives. It may all sound obvious, but it's easy to get carried away and make a silly, snap decision that you'll regret later. After all, there's always likely to be another, possibly better, candidate lurking unloved in the classifieds…

^ If you're going for an unfinished project, find out what's been done and what parts are included in the sale

GRAB YOUR BUCKETS…

Local classic car shows are fun, especially if they finish by the seaside. The Great Bucket and Spade Run, held each June, is one such event and celebrated its 36th anniversary this year. It's organised by the Ramsgate Old Motor and Motorcycle Club (ROMMCC), starts near Ashford and finishes on the grassy seafront at Ramsgate. And guess what, the sun actually came out, according to reader Grant Mackay-Howard who kindly sent some pics of the VWs which took part.

Your shout

Softer springs?

My Beetle has king and link pins and is lowered using adjustable beams. However, it currently rides too hard for my liking. Do you have any front shocks to recommend that can offer a softer ride over the bumps on the road? I'm from Singapore and I'm getting pretty fed up with the rough ride during my daily commute.

Kenneth Luo, via email

Are you running stock shocks? Also, what profile tyres are you using? There's usually a compromise when lowering a car, but hopefully there's scope for improving your Bug's ride – Ed.

Here to help

We are two French guys in love with vintage VWs, and having encountered mechanical troubles on the road with our VW campervans, we started developing a smartphone app which could help the vintage VW community.

We created the app *Save my VW trip*: www.facebook.com/SavemyVWtrip/ and https://savemyvwtrip.com/en/

This app gathers on a map all the vintage VW specialists, meetings and owners (who wish to appear, but localisation is not precise for safety reasons). Members can create an SOS in case of mechanical troubles during their trip, and also an alert in case of theft of their beloved VW.

Up to now, 1121 members are registered on the app, which is translated into French, English and Spanish (German is coming soon). With 424 vintage VW specialists and 177 meetings, many people used the app this summer, created SOS or theft alerts. We're hoping the community will grow to enable us to travel the world with our old VWs in the knowledge we can find a specialist for our old Beetle or Bus.

We made this app free as it fits to the VW community spirit, and wish to keep it this way.

Julian Capdepon and Damien Cebrian, via email

^ A worldwide network of fellow VW enthusiasts to help you out of a fix while on your travels? Hmmm, not a bad idea…

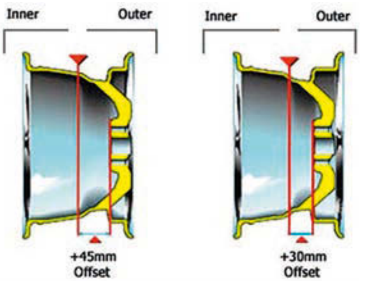
TIP OF THE MONTH

Beetle wheels

Swapping factory rims for something more interesting is usually the first job we do when buying a Beetle. So what do you need to consider?

- **Wheel size** – The overall diameter and width of the wheels you can fit will be dictated by your wings and how much clearance you've got in terms of suspension and brake components. Most stock Beetle wheels are 5Jx15in (5in wide by 15in in diameter), although some aftermarket wheels come in 14in sizing for more of a 'Euro' look. People rarely fit bigger diameter wheels to a Beetle although you can certainly go a tad wider with a 5.5J wheel (5.5in wide) being a popular option. Bear in mind, if you change the rolling diameter of your wheels, it will affect the speedometer reading. Go smaller and it will read faster, bigger and it will read slower than it should.

- **Offset** – The amount of wheel offset, in other words, the distance between the rim's centre line and its mounting surface, is described by the initials ET. Most wheels have a positive ET and on most stock 15in Beetle rims it ranges from +25 to +34. ET's important when it comes to clearing steering and suspension components and whether the tyre's likely to rub the inner edge of the wing. ET 45 is a common measurement on aftermarket rims that are likely to give a more purposeful 'wider' look when fitted. Obviously there are tricks such as fitting hubcentric wheel spacers (they are available in widths from 3-10mm) which will make a rim sit more flush to the arches. Remember, you will need longer bolts as well.



- **Bolt pattern** – referred to as Pitch Circle Diameter (or PCD) this is the imaginary line that runs through the centre of each of the bolts that hold the wheel on to the car. An early 'wide five' PCD of 5x205 for example would indicate a five-bolt arrangement on a circle with a diameter of 205mm. The PCD on Beetles changed from 5x205mm to 4x130mm from late 1967 with bolt dimensions changing from M12x1.5 (torqued to 10mkg) to M14x1.5 (torqued to 13mkg). The PCD can be altered via plugging, welding and re-drilling but it's a specialist machine shop job. A simpler solution is to use PCD adaptors which will allow you to fit a variety of wheels from other manufacturers such as Chevrolet, Jaguar or Porsche, but bear in mind these will widen your Beetle's track. Alternatively, buy redrilled discs and drums. You need to have a think about the centre hole diameter as well in order to clear the hub nuts and dust caps.

Latest Stuff

SUITABLY PRIMED

From: www.vwheritage.co.uk
Price: from £25 (1-litre)

RAPTOR has already come to the rescue of VW restorers with their range of protective coatings; and now they've released a world beating epoxy primer as well. Tested with 1000 hours' worth of salt water spray, this paint-on preserver can be used in conjunction with any top coat, not just RAPTOR.

Available from parts specialists VW Heritage, it is sold in 1-litre and 5-litre tins and a little is said to go a long way.

For October only you can buy 4-litres of RAPTOR, 1-litre of Epoxy primer and an application gun for £122.40, a saving of more than £60.

JUMP TO IT

From: www.machinemart.co.uk
Price: £89.99

This small and lightweight portable lithium-ion power pack acts as a multi function jump start, charger and torch, making the ideal addition to your classic VW's glovebox.

There is also a range of connectors including mains charger and a 4-in-1 device adaptor for phones, tablets, etc. The handy thing is, it will keep its charge for roughly six months if not used.

HIDE AND SEEK

From: www.richingsgreetham.co.uk
Price: see text

This new range of posh automotive travel accessories from British brand RichingsGreetham uses the finest quality leather and includes a travel pouch (£98), notebook and passport holder (£68), zip wallet (£58), glasses case (£58), night out card fold (£48) and iPhone case (£88). They are available in tan, navy and black – and would make the perfect travelling companion for you and your VW.

All prices include VAT

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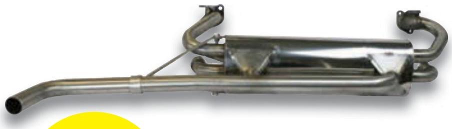

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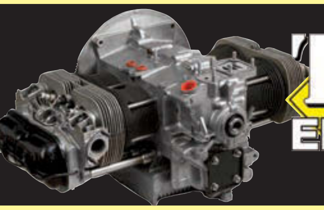

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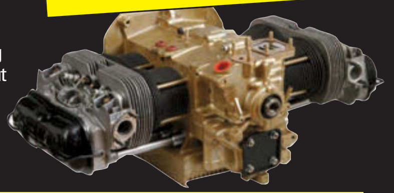

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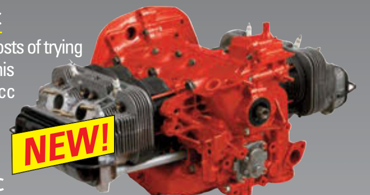

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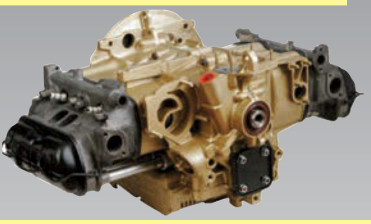

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Car of the month

Porsche steelies look great but make the car heavy to steer with its 195 tyres

Rob and Gill Bircher, 1956 Beetle

This duo's '56 Deluxe was imported to the UK from Sweden 10 years ago and has retained much of its originality, including its 1200cc engine, 6V electrics and Polar Silver paintwork. They have owned the car for around three years, during which time Rob has rebuilt the engine, as it was getting rather tired. The refurb included fitting new barrels and pistons, along with some reconditioned heads and a reconditioned carburettor. The distributor and regulator were also rebuilt. Then the engine tinware was powder coated black and the rest of it carefully detailed, resulting in a very clean and sanitary installation.

A previous owner had retrimmed the seats in green vinyl, though the doorcards are thought to be original. One aspect of the Beetle that's not original is the Porsche 356 steel wheels, which are shod with Goodyear Eagle 195x65/15 radials. Rob admits the wider tyres make the steering a bit heavier, and having retained the skinnier originals, hasn't ruled out the option of refitting them, along with some whitewall tyres for aesthetic appeal.

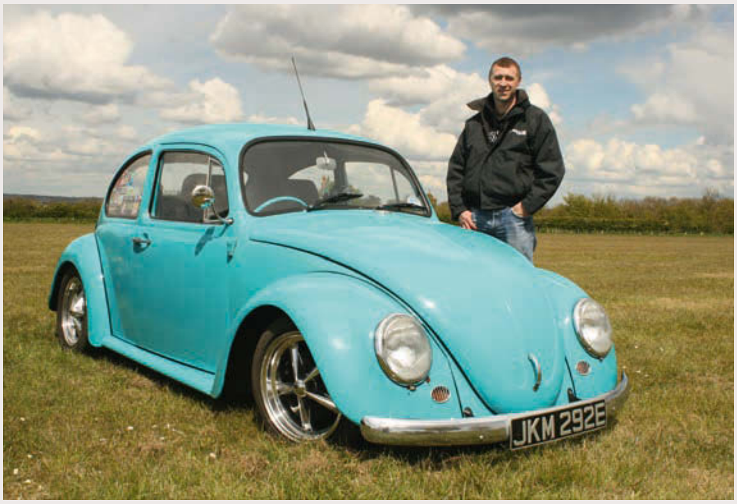
> "It's basically a case of keeping on top of things"

Rob's fitted LED bulbs in the semaphores, but says he struggles at night with the headlights. "They're like candles, and when you rev the engine the lights get brighter," he smiles.

Another planned job is sorting the few paintwork imperfections. "It's generally very good and virtually rust-free, but I want to tackle the stonechips before they get any worse," he explains. "It's basically a case of keeping on top of things."

Seats have had a retrim, but doorcards look pretty original

Rob rebuilt the original engine himself, fitting new pistons, barrels and reconditioned heads

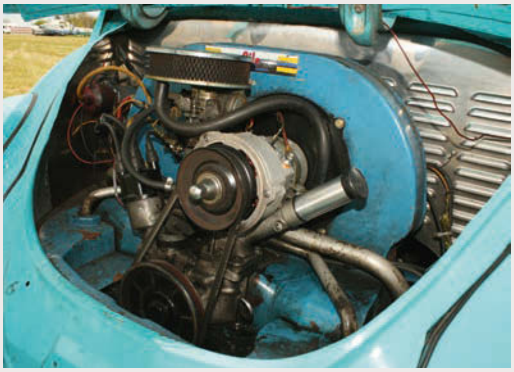


Adrian Holman, 1967 Beetle

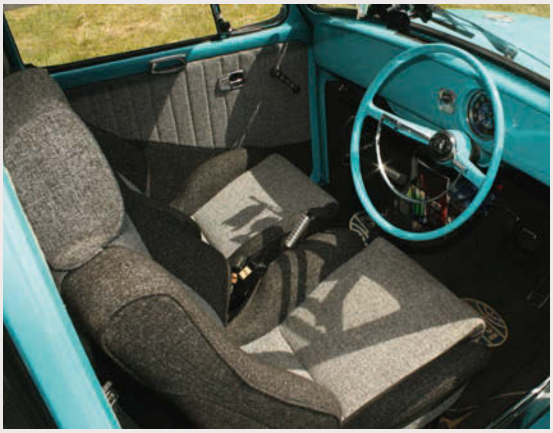
Adrian purchased his Beetle in 1993, ostensibly because he fell in love with its vivid turquoise blue paintwork, which he still loves to bits. It's reputed to be an old Peugeot colour. The rain gutters have been shaved off, solenoids open the one-piece window doors, all the exterior handles have been removed and sensor switches open the bonnet and boot lid. "During my ownership I've added a little exterior chrome and I've changed the interior," explains Adrian. "The front seats are from a Scirocco and were retrimmed by Bernard Newbury eight years ago and are extremely comfortable." At the same time Adrian fitted a new headlining, parcel shelf and doorcards.

Some time ago Adrian had an argument with a raised manhole cover which resulted in extensive damage to the rear valance, deck lid, wings, and bumper which all had to be repaired. Two years ago a 4in narrowed beam was fitted at the front while at the rear he fitted adjustable spring plates. If it went any lower, Adrian says he wouldn't be able to get off his driveway.

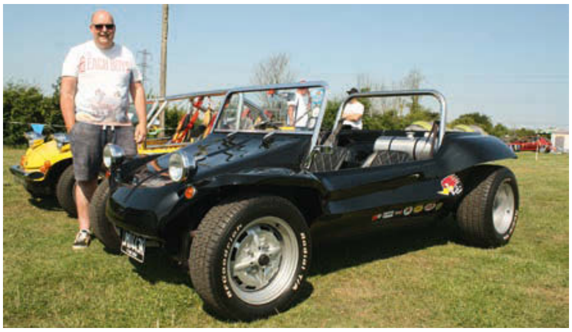
"Over the years I've had three different sets of wheels, starting with body colour coded steels with domed hubcaps, which I still have in my garage. I changed those for EMPI five-spokes and recently swapped those for Radar alloys. The engine is a 1300cc with an alternator conversion, 009 Bosch dizzy and a performance coil, and all the brakes have been refurbished."



There's some detailing left to do here, but the original 1300cc single port lump is proving reliable enough



Bernard Newbury trimmed the 'Rocco front pews – Adrian confirms they're dead comfy



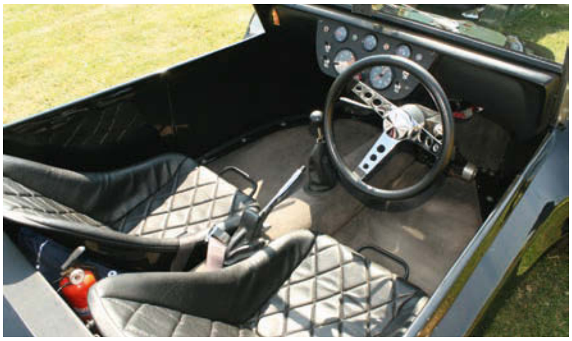
Colin Rook, 1972 LWB GT Beach Buggy

Colin's '72 Beetle, purchased in 1988, made it into Readers' Rides in its former Cal-Look guise and the idea originally was to restore it. "I had a nice shiny chassis built up but decided to make it into a Buggy instead, and opted for a GT Mouldings LWB kit," he explains. "The body was fitted to the chassis in the early 1990s and it still sports the original black gelcoat, which has remained in fantastic condition."

Currently power comes from a 1641cc engine, built by Harry Harpics, the specification including twin 34 ICT Weber carbs and a Sidewinder exhaust. The interior features comprehensive dashboard instrumentation in a very neat layout. "My dad, Derek, is a wiring genius, he completed a full rewire over the winter," says Colin.

"I was perfectly happy to sacrifice the rear seating arrangement, in preference of the cylindrical fuel tank, something that I've always desired."

Another job that was tackled over the last winter, was an overhaul of the steering and suspension and to fit new telescopic dampers, with Protech aluminium fully adjustables. "First we had the Buggy weighed and then the company built the dampers to suit. They have worked wonders for the overall handling and I can run sensible tyre pressures of 20psi, without having to endure a rock hard ride."



Colin's dad did the dash install. The sparkly Barry Grant wheel sets things off nicely

Colin has a 1500cc 'box in the wings which should make the Harry Harpics 1641cc build a little less revvy while cruising

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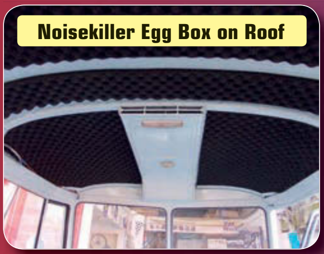

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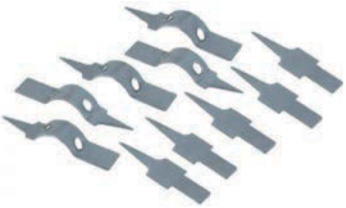

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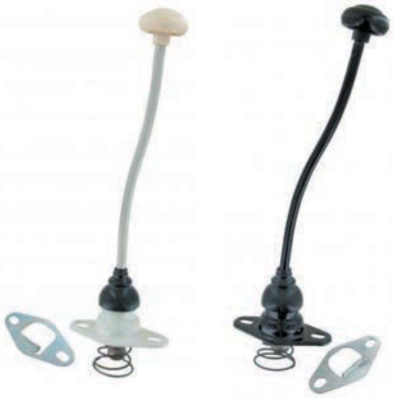

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Catalogue 10
Volkswagen Beetle

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Transmission mount bushing

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Holy Fuchs

They're among the most adored add-ons for customised VWs, yet the Fuchs alloy was never intended for Wolfsburg's finest. Here's how the classic wheel design came into existence and jumped ship from Porsche to Volkswagen

Words
Richard Gunn

This issue's Blast from the Past is a little bit left-field. It's about an object of extreme desire to many Volkswagen owners, yet it has almost nothing to do with the marque itself and wasn't even a VW accessory, official or otherwise. But that hasn't stopped it ending up on thousands of VWs all over the world and being much admired for it. We are, of course, talking about the Fuchs alloy wheel.

These simple but elegant rims may have been designed for Porsches, but their Volkswagen cousins have benefited almost as much from what is now an iconic yet practical piece of industrial design. In genuine or replica form, they're one of the default go-tos for many modifiers. Because however good they look on a Porsche, they look equally as cool on an, um, air-cooled classic VW. But what's the story behind their invention?

Sly fox

It was in May 1910 that Otto Fuchs (his surname means 'Fox' in English, in case you're wondering, hence the company logo of a stylised fox) founded a small brass foundry in Meinerzhagen, Germany. By the 1920s, things were going so well that it had expanded to employ over 400 people and was already supplying Germany's motor industry. But it was only after Otto died, in 1931, that his son Hans Joachim Fuchs really kickstarted the expansion, which he did by taking the firm into working with aluminium. The use of this had become much more widespread during WW1 for aircraft construction and so, naturally, the burgeoning aviation industry was an area that Fuchs targeted.

^ The Fuchs alloy has become almost as famous – and desirable – as the vehicles it's been officially and unofficially used on

Tanks a lot

The snappily-named Otto Fuchs Metall- und Armaturenwerke Meinerzhagen GmbH had its first real contact with Porsche during WW2, when the firm and Ferdinand Porsche – freshly diverted from designing the Beetle – collaborated on Tiger and Elefant heavy tanks. Fuchs was responsible for the forged wheels – and they had to be pretty tough items because, at 65 tonnes (143,000lb – that's over 91 VW Beetles) these tanks were huge.

After the war ended, Fuchs became directly involved with Volkswagen, as it provided synchroniser rings for Beetle transmissions from the 1950s onwards. However, gearbox bits aren't terribly

The Fuchs design team and their greatest creation

The company logo is a stylised fox

FUCHS

The design masterpiece was inspired by US designs and the need to aid brake cooling

Making forged alloys for a production car was a radical move by Porsche in the mid-1960s

sexy – what was around the corner for Fuchs definitely was.

The company moved into making alloy wheels for cars in 1962. This was a time when steel was the norm for rims, even on prestigious new sports cars such as the Porsche 911, which had been unveiled in 1963. While it had very good-looking chromed rims, they weren't that far removed from what everything else was wearing. Something a little more special was required.

Porsche was looking for a light alloy wheel but it soon became clear that such an item wouldn't meet all of the marque's high performance needs. So instead, it approached Fuchs, which pitched an entirely new idea – a forged alloy wheel that would also be suitable for mass production.

Difference of opinion

Responsible for the Windmill wheel – or Fuchsfelge – was Heinrich Klie of Porsche's styling department. There should be some long and tortuous story involved with the creation of such a design great, but there wasn't. Heinrich had no real brief – his first proposal, the classic five-spoke look, apparently influenced by American designs but also intended to aid brake cooling, was accepted by Ferry Porsche (Ferdinand's son, then in charge of the company) with 'a wave of a hand' according to Heinrich. This is somewhat at odds with what Ferry himself later claimed, which was that he "didn't really like the looks all that well," but the marketing department apparently swayed him. And how right it proved to be. After some minor mods by Porsche's suspension guru Rudolf Hoffmann, and testing on various cars, it was off to Fuchs for production.

As simple as the wheel appears, the manufacturing process involved 58 steps, including polishing, anodising and painting. It made its Porsche debut on the more powerful 911S of 1966, as standard equipment. So utterly right did it look that, from that point onwards, Porsche and Fuchs became inextricably linked – the wheels would remain a fixture on 911s for over 20 years, albeit growing in size and sporting subtle changes in style and colours over that period. They also ended up on the ultra-rare 916s. It was only with the advent of the Type 964 Porsche 911 of 1989 that traditional Fuchs wheels bowed out, replaced by the much less distinctive Design 90 rims.

By that time, Volkswagen owners had long since discovered that what looked superb on a Porsche also rather suited their vehicles as well. Given that the wheels were designed specifically to suit the 911, it was a very happy accident that a nice set of Fuchs also did the business on Beetles, Buses, Karmann Ghias or pretty much anything else from Volkswagen's truly classic era. Maybe it's just a rear-engined thing? Despite the need for a little bit of work to fit them, the wheels started to proliferate on VWs from the start of the modifying craze. And when the real things started to become too expensive, replicas soon filled the void. Anyone for a cheap(er) Fooks? One of the most common sights at any VW show these days has to be visitors pointing at wheels and questioning owners as to whether they're the real thing or not. Well, are they?

> "the classic five-spoke look was accepted by Ferry Porsche with a wave of a hand"

Fuchs on Volkswagens look here to stay for a long time to come. And that can only be a good thing as far as we're concerned. If only other Porsche parts were as simple to add… ■

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Laying it down gently

We've featured loads of cars on air, but after seeing James Munro's Porsche 356 replica we're wondering why more Speedsters haven't had the low down treatment

Words Mike Renaut **Photos** Matt Richardson

Welcome to
MBA
entre
Karibu Sana

“I had the car built in my head a long time before we began actually putting it together”

^ When you go this low the ground gets in the way. The 356 replica lays frame at both ends thanks to a complex air suspension system

Let’s set the scene; photographer Matt and I are bravely fighting our way through the M6 traffic en route to Birmingham to meet up with James Munro and his Porsche 356 Speedster replica. Ever the optimist, Matt has already asked James if he can find some palm trees for the shoot. Palm trees in Birmingham, Matt? Really? Yet James has come up trumps and now we just have to get there through drizzling rain that has just turned into a monsoon. And we’re aware that the Porsche doesn’t have a roof…

We arrive to find him soaking wet from holding umbrellas over his immaculate leather interior. The seats are dry but he’s not, yet he’s surprisingly upbeat. Though wouldn’t you be if you owned a car this gorgeous? I’m highly impressed already before he even starts the engine but then James positions the car for the first photos – in front of palm trees no less – and asks: “shall I drop the suspension down?” As the Speedster slowly and gently settles onto the damp ground, we know our gruelling drive up here has been worthwhile.

“It was finished about 12 months ago,” explains James, “I always wanted a Porsche 356 on airbag suspension and I had the car built in my head a long time before we began actually putting it together. He got into Volkswagens at the age of 17 with a Mk1 Golf, but grew up in a household where his dad owned a few Porsche 911s, so that was a big influence – although naturally he couldn’t afford one of those as a teenager. “I had a lot of Mk2 Golf GTis, probably eight or nine, one of which was a full-on show car. But I always had this idea of an air suspension Speedster – and the thought just wouldn’t go away.”

Guinea pig

The essence of James’ 356A 1600 Super is a Bag Riders (www.bagriders.com) four-way manual paddle valve suspension kit fitted to a Speedster Clinic CNC chassis that mounts their 356A fibreglass body. “Searching for someone who shared my vision I was introduced to Gary Blundall at Speedster Clinic in Kenilworth (www.speedsterclinic.com / 01676 248413) and he used my project as a bit of a guinea pig to try out ideas,” laughs James. “Besides, I’d seen a thread on an American website showing an air ride install and it looked straightforward enough. Gary initially wasn’t sure how it was all going to work but we put a lot of thought into it and came up with

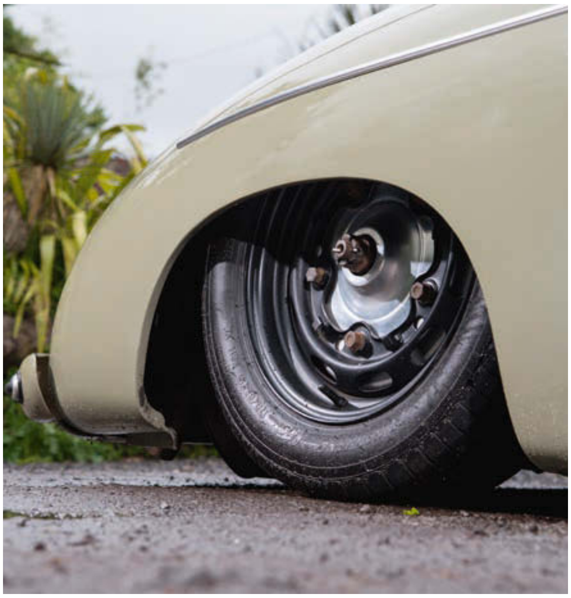
workable solutions for most of the problems."

The first task was getting it low enough to hit the dirt, or 'laying frame' as the lowrider guys refer to it. "I believe this is the first Speedster in the UK to be set up like this and go so low," comments James. "The essential thing was it had to drop low enough to touch the ground." To achieve this, he even went as far as having custom brackets made for the bags for the independent rear suspension. We often feature cars with narrowed front axles but this build was so low it even required a slightly narrowed rear axle too, since even with a fair bit of negative camber the rear tyres were scraping.

Meanwhile, Airkewld (www.airkewld.com) supplied the front beam axle and front air shocks and you won't be surprised to hear that it also had to be narrowed, in this case by three inches.

Devilish details

With the chassis sorted, the guys began looking at the body. "It's a standard Speedster Clinic glassfibre bodyshell but we had to cut away an area of the rear seat and notch the frame for clearance," remembers James. Body-wise the 356 is constructed solely from Speedster Clinic parts including the bumpers and windscreen,



^ Lots of modifications are required below the surface if you want to build a car that sits lower than the stock suspension would ever allow

TECH INFO

BODY
Speedster Clinic fibreglass Porsche 356A 1600 Super, painted in Porsche Stone Gray; body modified to fit around the suspension system; CNC chassis with custom suspension mounts

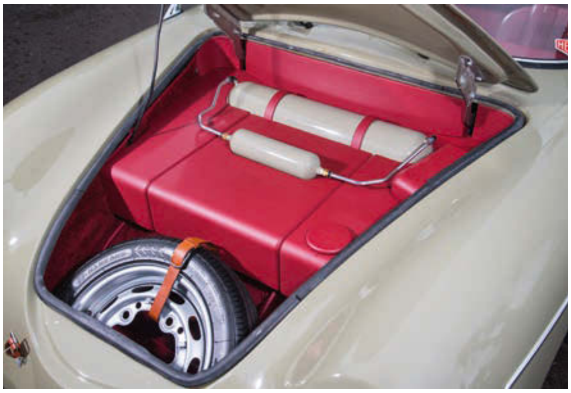
ENGINE
1641cc Beetle block with stock internals; twin Weber carbs; Empi exhaust

GEARBOX
Stock Beetle four-speed

SUSPENSION
Bag Riders four-way manual paddle-valve suspension kit, with custom mounts

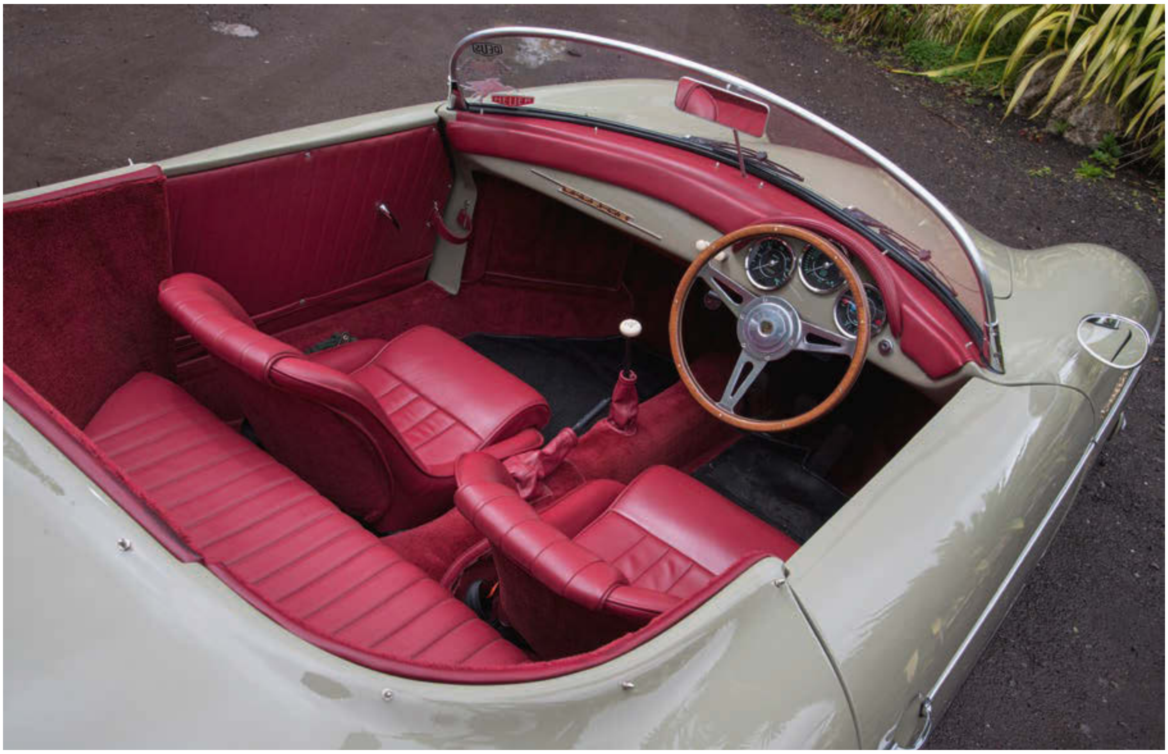
INTERIOR
Custom leather trim; Mota Lita steering wheel

WHEELS AND TYRES
4.5in Porsche reproduction steel wheels – 145 65/R15 (front), 175 65/R15 (rear)



James admits his Speedster copy wasn't built on the cheap and here's the evidence – a boot lined in red leather with body-coloured air tank. This is a high quality car throughout

When you want to add a touch of class to your sports car, go to Mota Lita for a steering wheel, then add a Porsche crest to the centre



We can't see any way this interior could be improved upon. After all, if hand stitched Italian leather in claret was good enough for Ferrari why not Porsche too?

the dashboard also being part of the mould. The subtle 'green' paint is a 1957 Porsche 356 colour called Stone Gray and was skillfully applied by the chaps at Lemass Automotive (www.lemass.co.uk / 01494 874347). "Any extra trim that was required came from Roger Bray Restoration (www.rogerbrayrestoration.com / 01404 822005) or Sierra Madre Collection (www.sierramadrecollection.com) although some of the badges are original Porsche since they aren't all available as reproductions."

One thing we love about this car is the attention to detail. Open the front boot and you spot the colour coded air tanks and then the Porsche logo embossed into the leather on that trick fuel tank surround. You'll only ever see it when filling the fuel tank, but it's there. And just like that surround, the interior is all hand-stitched imported Italian claret leather. The seats were given some extra padding first though. The steering wheel is a Mota Lita with the addition of a Porsche crest in the centre.

> "some of the badges are original Porsche since they aren't all available as reproductions"

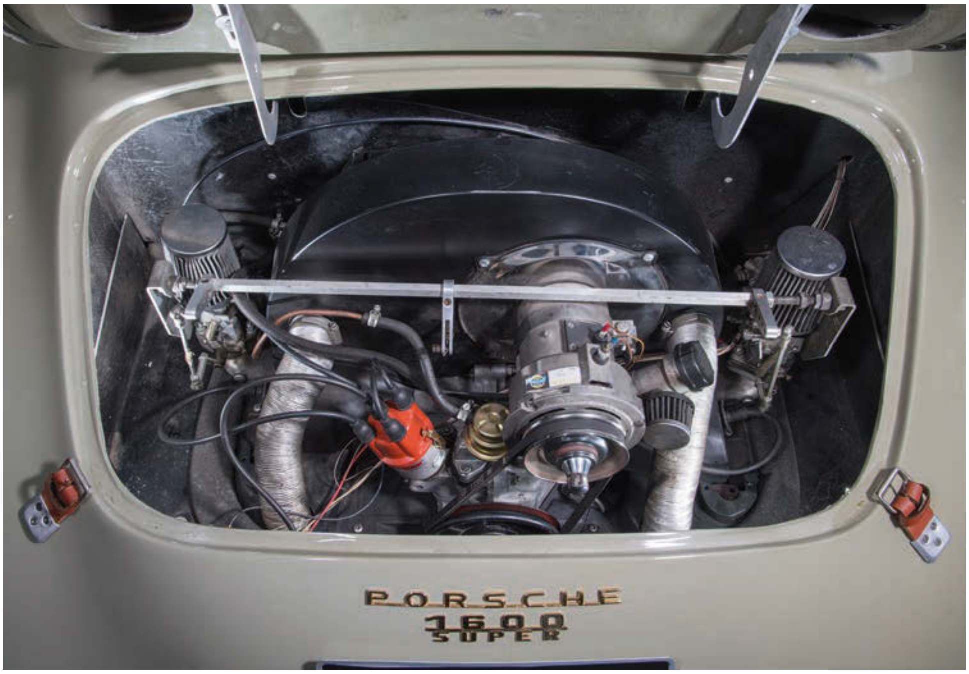
A local electrician put in a 12-volt wiring loom, and as James explains: "He's a guy who does kit cars so it was a straightforward job. I asked for a few extra circuits to handle the air ride but there's no heater or even a radio fitted so it's still a pretty basic loom." Once that was done, Plush Automotive (www.plush-automotive.co.uk) stepped in to undertake what James calls some 'tidying up'. "They finished and custom trimmed/fabricated the air ride install once it was plumbed in to get it operational. They also did the leather trimming, the hard line install – essentially everything you see under the bonnet. I also have to thank my friends Mike and Paul at Worcestershire-based independent Porsche specialists Zuffenhaus (www.zhporsche.co.uk / 01564 823144) who helped out with lots of jobs to finish it off."

Utterly roofless

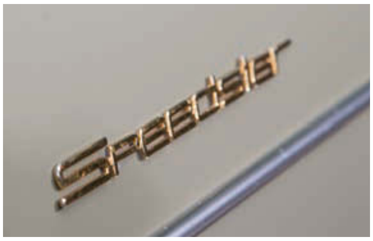
Under that rear bonnet is a 1641cc Beetle block wearing twin Weber carbs and an Empi exhaust. "That exhaust system was one of the

^ Sitting a 356 this low to the ground gives it a very different look, note the rear belts that match the pair at the front

^ Reutter Carosserie-Werke produced Beetle bodies and, from 1949, high quality bodies for Porsche. After two decades they were absorbed into the Porsche company



^ A helpful reminder of what model Porsche it is you're driving, but not a cheap one since many of the badges on this car are original and not reproductions



^ That's 1641cc of Volkswagen power there, and since the car weighs about the same as a big packet of crisps it gets the 356 down the road in no time

James had considered building a coupe rather than a Speedster, but then he'd have been deprived of this stunning view

There's something very cool about undoing a belt or two to open your car's bonnet – modern cars just aren't the same

By the time you read this the 356 will be forever out of the rain and James will be behind the wheel of his dream 911

hardest parts to figure out,” reveals James. “Because the car is so low we had to rework the system so it sweeps upward and then down to maintain both the correct length and the proper clearance.” The gearbox is a standard four-speed from a Beetle as are the brakes, which are drums all round. “I planned to put disc brakes on the front, but in truth it doesn't need them. Being lighter than a Beetle it actually stops very well.”

> “That exhaust system was one of the hardest parts to figure out”

Despite the fact that it was already designed in his head, right down to the belts holding down the bonnet and boot, the build still took over three years to complete. And with all that forethought, as we wipe the rain from the 356, we can't help wondering if James now wishes he'd thought about some sort of roof. “I had considered building it as a coupe but there was the extra cost of the side glass and chrome trim, plus at the time Gary had only ever done one coupe so I thought rather than compromise I'd go with the Speedster version.”

Another question we were dying to ask was how does an air-suspended 356 handle on the UK's pothole-filled roads? “If I'm driving fast I have to put 80psi in the front suspension and 50psi in the rear for the best combination of handling and ride quality,” says James. “It's also important to remember that the tracking was set up with the suspension at the most typically used setting, so if I drive it right down low that will have an effect on the feel of the steering.”

Is there anything James might have done differently if he were to build another one? “I'd like to have done the build myself since I have a decent enough mechanical ability but nowhere near enough time,” he admits. “I'd rather use professionals and get perfect results than do it all in my shed. The car was built as and when I had the necessary money to spend on it. You can build a 356 replica for £15,000 if you do it the cheap way. But this one wasn't built cheap...”

Now the bad news. Don't expect to see the 356 at any more UK shows because in spite of all the effort he's put into it, James has just sold his 356. “I've literally just done a deal with a guy from Mauritius. He saw the car on Facebook and Facetimed me asking if it was for sale. He was really keen and made an offer I couldn't refuse, so next week it's getting loaded into a container.” At least the Speedster should be kept out of the rain over there. Don't offer James too much sympathy though, he won't be on foot for long, “I've just bought my childhood dream car; a 1982 Porsche 911 SC,” he smiles. We're pretty sure that 911 won't end up on air ride, but who knows… ■

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Built to pull

When Dave Bridge needed a tow wagon for his 11-second VWDRC drag Buggy and somewhere to kip while racing it, guess what he came up with…

Words Dave Bridge **Photos** Matt Richardson

You can almost hear the American voice-over from the iconic 1963 Snow Plough ad in your head when you meet Dave Bridge and his Bus. “Have you ever wondered how the man who drives a drag car drives to the drag strip? This one drives a cleverly tweaked, fully restored ’77 Bus. So you can stop wondering.” Okay, so his drag car, or drag Buggy to be more accurate, is usually in tow behind – but you know what we mean.

As we’ve alluded to, despite looking pretty stock, this Late Bay has quite a few tricks up its sleeve. In fact, we’re surprised Dave hasn’t ditched the Buggy and ran this on the strip instead. But as he explains, his reasons for wanting a camper in the first place were much more legitimate.

“The story really starts with my last Bus, another Late Bay I had for 13 years,” explains Dave. “It was a tin top, looked presentable and did everything I needed it to. But after our sons, Jamie and Thomas, were born, while they would be snuggled up in the van, my wife Karen and I were in the awning. It suddenly seemed a bit pointless having a van but sleeping in a tent.” Which obviously got Dave thinking.

The first line of thought for the 41 year-old lawyer from St Albans was to stick with his existing Bus and fit a reproduction Westfalia style roof. But he soon came to the conclusion that he wanted the real thing, so began his

>

WGE 94R

Totally stock appearance on the outside, cleverly meddled with underneath

TECH INFO

BODY
Stock 1977 Westfalia with side markers; aerial and fridge vent deleted; 2 pack Standox paint in original Taiga Green, roof in semi-matt Pastel White

ENGINE
2007cc Type 1 built by Harry Harpics & Sons using a NOS VW case; counter-weighted chromoly 78mm crank; harmonic pulley; NOS stock rods; balanced bottom end; 90.5mm Mahle barrels and pistons; Total seal piston rings; Engle 110 cam; 041 heads with semi-hemi cut combustion chambers; 37 x 35mm valves; steel pushrods; Scat rockers; Berg pump, cover and deep sump; 16-row Mocal cooler with fan and thermostat; Weber 40IDFs; stainless merged exhaust with heat exchangers; custom made breather box by Baskerville Engineering, Kimpton

GEARBOX
Six-rib 091 gearbox, rebuilt by Cogbox (www.cogbox transmissions.com); Berg locking shifter

SUSPENSION
CSP adjusters in front beam on highest setting; stock height at rear; KYB gas shocks; heavy-duty anti-roll bars front and back

search for a late Westie with a big double bed in the roof. Having scanned the classifieds, US imports seemed the best bet, but most were projects and he needed something drivable, as it would need to be in service for the new race season. He also wanted to keep the engine and gearbox from the old van, so he needed a Bus with a good working motor and 'box he could swap over. He finally came up trumps with this '77, which was being sold by a camper hire business on the west coast of Scotland. While it looked solid enough and had an MoT, elevating roof, the swivel passenger seat he wanted, as well as a recon 1600cc engine with plenty of new bits on, the downside was that it had recently been repainted, obviously to sell on. Not knowing what was lurking under that gleaming new paint was a worry, but buoyed by the fact that the seller said the underneath was excellent, he took a chance and booked a flight to Glasgow.

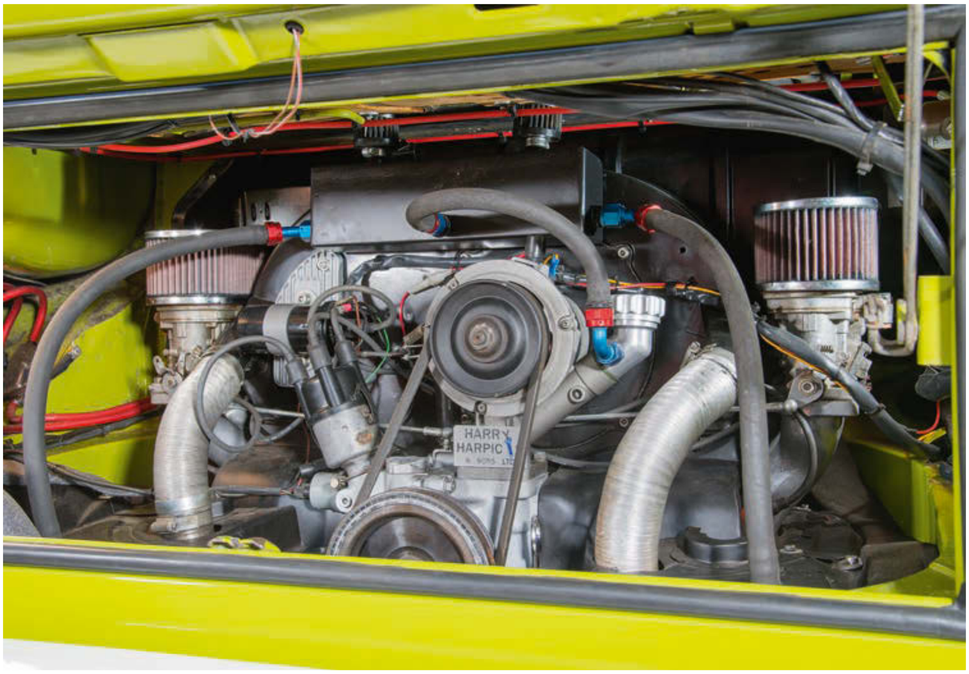
> “It suddenly seemed a bit pointless having a van but sleeping in a tent”

Journey of discovery

Having touched down and met the vendor, the early signs were good. Said Dave: “I could see original unwelded sills, outriggers, jacking points and just one repair patch on the driver's floor, which obviously came as a relief. Someone had welded in some nasty repro cab steps and looking from underneath I could see one rear corner was dented and had been filled, but it wasn't rusty and neither were the battery trays. A couple of areas I had commented on from the photos had been blown over since my phonecall with the owner, which was worrying, as was the rear seatbelt which was held in with a plastic blanking plug. Having bartered the price down though, I decided to give it a punt and agreed to leave the interior behind bar the driver's seat so I could drive it back.” While it made the 400-mile journey south to Hertfordshire, it wasn't exactly a fun ride. “The steering was atrocious – it took a half turn of the wheel before anything happened. How it came to have an MoT is a complete mystery.”

Once home, the Bus was delivered to Paul and Kyle Miller at Harry Harpics & Sons in Essex (www.harryharpics.com) to get the mechanicals refreshed. The engine and gearbox were removed, and while they were out Dave welded a new side panel into the engine bay where an aircon system had once been.

> "Nearly stock, but with subtle improvements"



2007cc engine built by Harry Harpics has more than enough grunt to pull along Dave's trailer and Buggy behind the Bus

"Once the paint was dry, we fitted the six-rib gearbox from my old van, plus the 2007cc engine Paul built for me back in 2003. This engine returns the same miles per gallon as a stock 1600 if you're gentle, but will surprise many modern saloons if you put your foot down. Best of all, it will tow a ton and a half of trailer and racecar all day long. After 60,000 miles, it still pulls like a train and there was no way I was letting it go."

The steering box turned out to be fine; the pinch bolt wasn't done up on the steering column. However, Dave wasn't taking any chances and renewed all the other steering components, as well as fitting new KYB shocks, new discs, drums, brake hoses and gearshift bushes. A few other bits were also transplanted from the old van, including the Berg locking shifter, VDO gauges and towbar.

Kraft work

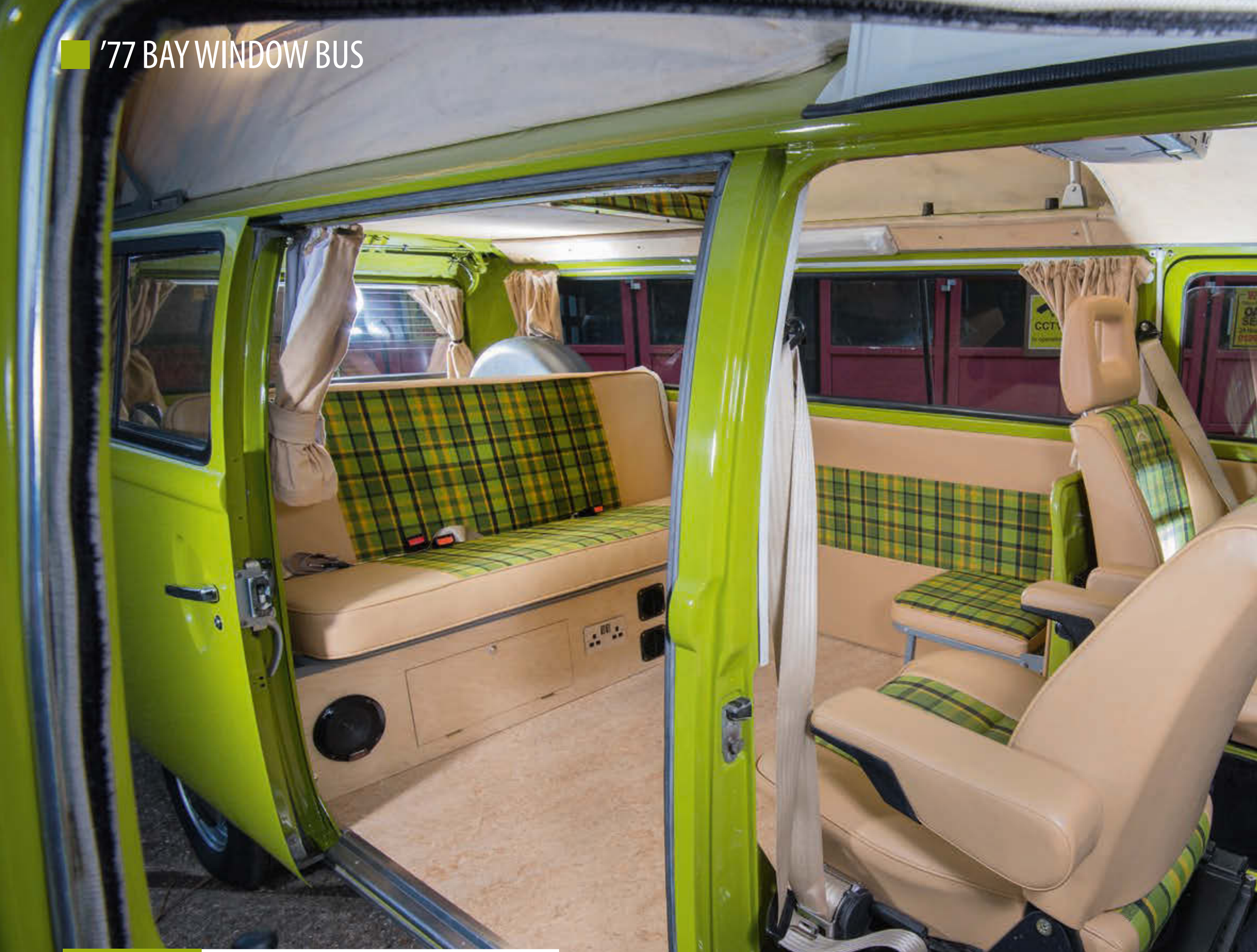
The next step was to build a temporary camping interior for the next season, so he fitted a full width Rusty Lee rock and roll bed, a buddy seat and, after welding in new seat runners, some T25 Caravelle seats with armrests. "My theme for the van as a whole was to be OEM+. Nearly stock, but with subtle improvements."

In this form Dave used the van throughout 2013 for camping and racing, plus family visits at Christmas, which gave him a four-month window before the next season to address the bodywork.

"On previous cars I have owned I have done all the welding and paint prep myself, but work and family commitments, as well as a desire for a top quality job, meant this time I turned to Hayden Watson at Panelkraft in Arlesey (www.panelkraft.com). Once the old paint had been stripped off, overall it was fairly good news," he explains. "A couple of small patches had been let in, which would need to be done again to a higher standard, but the 'shell was mostly unwelded and the only real rust was in one side of the cargo floor."

The one piece of bad news was that the rear quarter panel behind the sliding door had been warped by excessive heat from welding where a small repair had been done at the bottom. The whole panel had then been loaded with filler to restore the contours. The only way to deal with this was to remove the rear quarter by drilling out all the spot welds and letting in a new section. Luckily, availability of genuine VW panels is good for Late Bays, and another complete panel was used for the cargo floor half, painted on the bottom side before being welded in. The naff repro front cab steps that had been fitted were cut out and replaced with genuine VW ones, cut from complete wheelarch panels. The crumpled rear corner was pulled out, while all the doors and the

Stock steelies look suitably fresh with their new coat of Chrome Silver paint



TECH INFO

INTERIOR
Type 25 Caravelle front seats; Rusty Lee full width rock 'n' roll bed and buddy seat, all trimmed in Biscuit leather and Westfalia plaid; Kenwood roof-mounted DVD player; Alpine CD player; 2x Vibe 400 watt amps; Alpine components front and rear; Waeco chest fridge (removable)

WHEELS AND TYRES
Stock 14in steels in original Chrome Silver; NOS German hubcaps; Barum 185x80 8-ply tyres

Propex heater (with gas bottle), a charger for the leisure battery, mains hook-up controller and amp is all hidden away under the rear bench

engine lid made way for brand new ones.

Dave's a man who likes to keep things simple, and this was echoed in his choice of fittings. "Lots of vans look cluttered or artificially vintage to me, with extra chrome trim, accessories, whitewalls etc. I wanted to keep it simple and emphasise the basic design, so I had Hayden weld up the holes for the US spec side-markers, the two Westfalia side vents I wouldn't be needing and the aerial hole on the front panel." The van was then painted inside and out in its original Taiga Green (L63H) before being flatted and polished to a mirror finish. The roof was painted in the correct semi-matt Pastel White, while the bumpers and badge were painted in gloss white and the wheels the correct Chrome Silver.

> "I wanted to keep it simple and emphasise the basic design"

After getting it back he then spent three days applying rust protection. "As I use the van all year round, as well as coating the insides of the box sections, all the paint underneath was treated to two coats of Bilt Hamber (www.bilthamber.com) firm underbody wax."

As always happens when a car is freshly painted, bits which had previously looked fine to go back on now looked tatty so Dave had all the handles rechromed by Capital Chrome Ltd on the Old Kent Road (capitalchrome.co.uk), while new genuine rubbers were fitted all round. "Fortunately, lots of NOS German parts can still be found for Late Bays, like the Hella indicator lenses, rear light housings and lenses, door latches, SWF wiper arms, Hagus mirrors and seals. The dashboard was replaced, along with the padded top, instrument panel and heater controls, while the

Roof mounted DVD is a treat for the kids seeing as though Dave spent hours threading the wires to it up through the screen pillars and under the cab headlining

Having been influenced by luxury German cars from the late '70s, Dave wanted an 'upgraded original' theme inside. A removable buddy seat cleverly incorporates a Waeco fridge

pedals, handbrake lever and steering column were repainted. The original rubber floormat was another item retained from my last van, as it is more practical for camping than carpet."

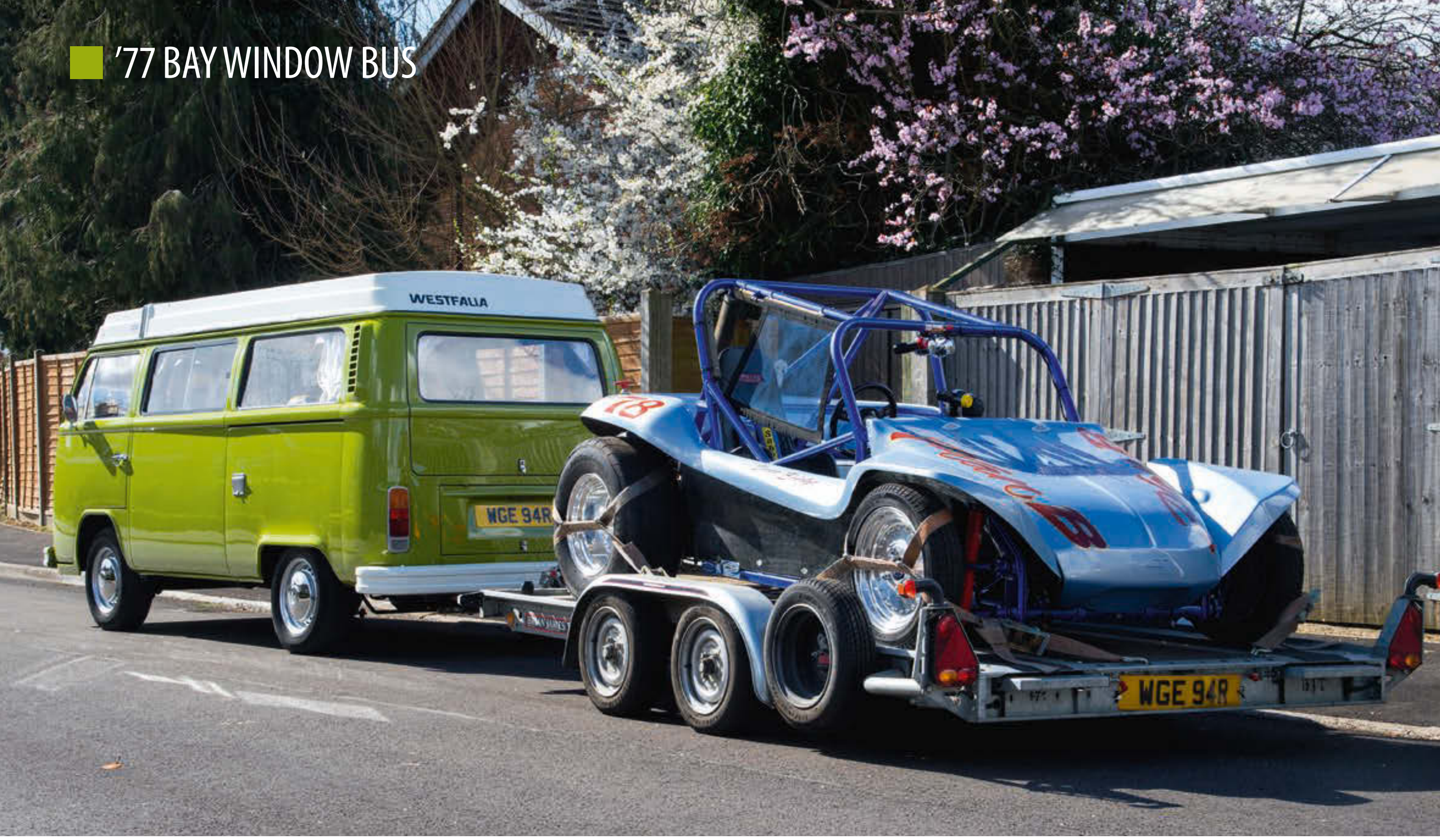
Doing it right

When it came to refitting the interior, Dave made a pledge to do things properly this time. Noisekiller (www.nkgroup.co.uk) soundproofing was used throughout and wiring was neatly routed under the floor panels for all the equipment he wanted. He opted for a real linoleum floor, in a light colour to match the birch ply used for the roof and the panel under the rear seat. Talking of which, the underseat compartment was carefully laid out to include a Propex heater and gas bottle, a battery charger for the leisure battery, a mains hook up control unit, an amplifier for the rear speakers and more storage space. As Dave

The big double bed in the roof Dave was looking for. He can sleep in comfort up there

Front seats are from a Type 25 and were covered in biscuit leather and Westfalia plaid by Bernard Newbury

Doesn't this look comfy! Deluxe cover neatly hides the spare



No work, all play – Bay is used to tow Dave's drag Buggy to races most weekends

recalls: “At the front I spent many an unhappy hour threading wires through the windscreen pillars for the drop-down DVD player (the boys' favourite bit of the van!) and the tweeters mounted in the roof panel, as well as the internal aerial behind the rear view mirror. An amp for the front speakers is mounted on the bulkhead behind the driver's seat.”

The look he had in mind for the interior was based on luxury German cars of the late '70s, particularly Porsches and Mercedes. “A lot of them used leather with plaid inserts and I thought this would work well with the Westfalia plaid, again to create an ‘upgraded original’ feel. I wanted the inside to be light and airy and I needed a lot of space in the middle for carrying tools and wheelie bars to the track, plus kids' bikes and anything else which needs transporting.”

> **“Harry Harpics fitted a set of adjusters, but only to get the front level with the back”**

Having got the layout how he wanted, Dave took a novel approach to creating a guide for a trimmer to follow. “I drew five sketches of the interior from different angles, photocopied them and painted various designs for trimming. I handed the best of these to Bernard Newbury (www.bernardnewbury.co.uk), who did my Beetle interior back in 1994, which still looks good today. He and Louis created what I had asked for down to the last detail: my pictures just came to life!”

Final touches inside included fitting an original Deluxe spare wheel cover, chrome tie down rings for securing loads, new curtain rails and a set of colour matched curtains. There are mounts for a removable Waeco fridge built in under the buddy seat, as well as the mandatory size fire extinguisher for race car pit areas. However, the headrests for the front seats posed a problem, being too complex a shape to cover with material – but again, Dave soon came up with a solution. “I found the answer at Kolorbond (www.kolorbond.co.uk), who mixed a batch of their special Vinylkote paint to match the seats. Hayden sprayed it on and you wouldn't know they hadn't come from the factory like that.”

Since completion, the van has been in regular use as a hauler and a camper, plus racecar transport and pit accommodation. A few further improvements have been made, like the sliding side windows to allow the kids to get some air on the move. A bigger change, and something Dave didn't really want to do, was getting it lowered. “The nose-up handling, especially when towing, was a bit sketchy so I took it back to Harry Harpics who fitted a set of adjusters, but only to get the front level with the back. Heavy-duty anti-roll bars were also added front and rear. It still isn't as stable as the tin top due to all the weight in the roof, but it is definitely better.”

We dare say, as time goes by, Dave will make further improvements but for now he's happy with the end result; stock at first glance, but tailored to his needs throughout. ■

Thanks to: Paul and Kyle at Harry Harpics for all their help, Hayden Watson at Panelkraft for top quality paint and body, my wife Karen for tolerating my old VW obsession and our boys Jamie and Thomas for all the suggested names for the van, none of which have persuaded me yet! Also, a happy retirement to Bernard Newbury.

Forty-one year-old Dave has good reason to smile having finished such a subtle and totally usable Late Bay build

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A Notch above the rest

There's one thing restoring an early '60s Notchback to its factory state, but it's a whole different ballgame getting the OE+ finish Kate Burch has achieved

Words and photos Simon Cooke

Kate Burch and her husband Mark already own a lovely Split Screen Bus and were looking to add a Beetle to their collection. But, as you can see, things didn't go quite to plan. "We went to Brighton Breeze and spotted a Notchback – not that we really knew what it was at the time – and we decided we wanted one of those instead," explains Kate.

She did a bit of digging and later discovered they were quite rare, but that made her want one even more – and after a bit of searching she eventually tracked one down for sale.

"I took my brother Jim with me to check it out," she remembers. Jim is no 'ordinary' brother – he's the 'J' in JKM Performance – a well-established VW tuning specialist in Portsmouth (jkm.org.uk). Kate is the 'K', and runs the office. Mind you, Jim concedes his air-cooled knowledge was rather scant at the time – not that he would have admitted that to his sister. In fact, this ended up being the first air-cooled restoration he's been involved with and, in truth, it turned into a steep learning curve. He even resorted, believe it or not, to reading a manual; but he's always up for a challenge such as fitting a Cosworth engine in a Capri – like you do.

>

"the vinyl was ripped, most of the seat springs were broken and the headlining was all hanging off"

"Jim drove it round the block; the oil pressure light came on and the brakes didn't work, but we bought it anyway," smiles Kate. They handed over £4000 and collected it on a trailer a few days later. When they got it back to the garage Jim gave it a proper examination and discovered there was no oil pressure at all and the crank had been damaged although the cam was still good.

"We were always going to restore it to a high standard and I originally thought it might take us about a year, but then we decided that if we were going to do it, we'd do it right with a full nut and bolt restoration," she explains. "So it actually took closer to three years and swallowed up a lot more money than we'd planned." In fact she reckons the Notchback's set her back close to £30,000 and that's not counting all the labour than Jim supplied for free.

Strip-tease

Jim removed the engine and ungallantly perhaps left the remains for Kate to sort out. The 'shell was stripped and sent to Enviro-Strip in Tamworth (www.envirostripgbltd.com) where it was dipped and covered with etch primer before moving on to Paul Baker Custom Metalwork in Hampshire (www.pbcm.co.uk) for new rear wings, tailgate, inner wings, heater channel, floor, and a front apron; apparently there was over 300 hours of welding and fabrication involved.

Finding parts for the project was an issue and bits came from around the globe, including T3HQ in Germany (type3headquarter.de) who supplied a long list of essentials. The new windscreen they needed took eight weeks to arrive and was made-to-order by a glass specialist. JKM seam welded the Notch, covered it with Raptor underbody treatment, refurbished and powder coated anything they could lay their hands on, and then sent it off to JRC Vehicle Repairs in Fareham (www.jrcvehiclerepairsltd.co.uk) for a new coat of paint – Jon, Gary and Steve all working their magic.

Meanwhile, Kate's attention turned to the scruffy interior. "The inside of the car looked terrible when I got it," she grumbles. "All the vinyl was ripped, most of the seat springs were broken and the headlining was all hanging off." It now looks good as new, or even better, thanks to the fine work the team at Ken's Customs (www.kenscustoms.co.uk) have put into it; Kate describes it as a 2017 version of the original 'salt and pepper' spec.

^ Kate's Notch scoots along nicely thanks to this twin Webered and fuel-injected 1914cc lump which she reckons makes around 100bhp

TECH INFO

BODY
1964 1500N Type 3 Notchback imported from Australia in Atlas White (L91Z) with Black roof (L041)

ENGINE
1914cc Auto Linea crankcase and heads; SCAT valvetrain; C35 camshaft; CB 69mm crank; SCAT conrods; Malhe pistons with total seal gapless rings; Jenvey throttle bodies; Emerald K6 ECU with custom trigger wheel set up; Vintage Speed exhaust; engine built, mapped and installed by Jim Mew at JKM Performance

GEARBOX
Standard rebuilt 4-speed gearbox; Vintage Speed short shifter

SUSPENSION
Standard suspension with uprated KYB shock absorbers; lowered front and rear; uprated bushes

BRAKES
CSP front brake discs conversion with alloy hubs and standard rear drums

> "the oil pressure light came on and the brakes didn't work, but we bought it anyway"

Boot area is shallow but beautifully formed

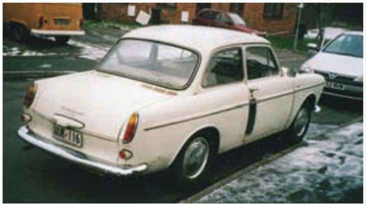
TECH INFO

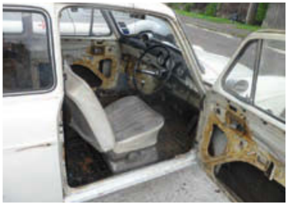
INTERIOR
Leather and cloth combination; German weave bespoke leather bound carpet; new headliner – all by Ken's Customs; Aircooled Accessories steering wheel

WHEELS AND TYRES
15in Radar wheels, powder coated chrome with black inserts; front tyres – 165/50R15 Yokohama BluEarth, rear tyres 175/60R15 Yokohama BluEarth

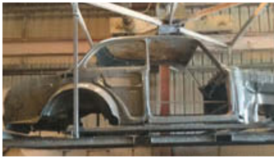
THE BUILD

Kate's car as it arrived in the UK, still on its original Aussie plates

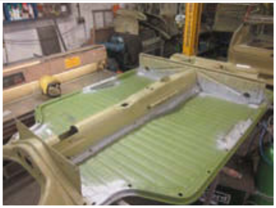




The Radar wheels along with a few other tweaks had already been made before Kate got the Notch. Judging by the lack of interior and dash-mounted rev counter, the previous owner was obviously after stripped out, race look

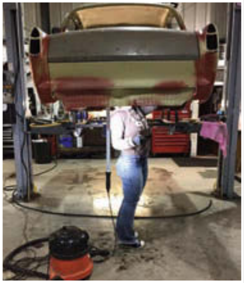


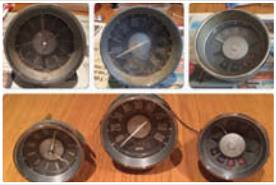
Under the previous paint job it was bad, very bad. Once everything had been taken apart, the body was sent to Enviro-Strip and etch primed. It ended up needing new rear wings, tailgate, inner wings, heater channel, floor, and a front apron; in short, over 300 hours of welding!



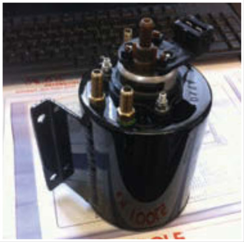
Here, new floorpan halves from Klassic Fab are being grafted into the original floorpan

Kate got stuck in wherever she could with the restoration. Thanks to her brother, Jim, she evidently had a dream working environment





After reading up on how to restore gauges, Kate performed a miracle makeover



Jim made the custom swirl pot with integrated fuel pump and even had the car's name stamped on it

With all the metalwork complete and ready for prep and painting, the 'shell was trailered to JRC Vehicle Repairs in Fareham

Will it fit? The car had been in two halves for so long it was an emotional moment for Kate seeing it being bolted back together

An Emerald K6 ECU for the engine management is neatly tucked away under the rear seat, along with a custom made wiring loom

Kate wanted an interior that was sympathetic to the original 'salt and pepper' design but with a modern twist and Ken's Customs totally smashed it. They did an amazing job

For the last couple of years, Kate's birthday and Christmas presents have been car parts. The Aircooled Accessories steering wheel and Vintage Speed short shifter were two such gifts

Naff-looking locally sourced vinyl seat coverings appeared on some Australian-assembled Type 3s, but Kate's definitely has a quality German feel inside

You've got to admit, that Notch rump looks highly distinctive from any angle

Bearing in mind Jim's air-cooled experience had so far been limited to servicing Kate's camper and building a Porsche 911 engine a few years earlier, the engine's transformation is nothing short of remarkable.

Fuel for thought

When the car left the Clayton factory in Australia – Kate tracked down where it was assembled – it would have been fitted with a single carb 1493cc engine producing 53bhp. It had since been fitted with a larger engine by a previous owner which Jim stripped before adding a host of magic touches. "He spent six months trying to convince me to swap to fuel injection rather than carbs and I eventually agreed," reveals Kate. "It had some decent carbs but they needed rebuilding and there were several other bits which needed to be replaced," said Jim, taking up the story. "I told Kate it would still look period, and sound air-cooled, but by fitting fuel injection and a modern ECU it would drive better, be more reliable and drink less fuel; it now does about 35mpg which, for an air-cooled engine, is pretty good!" The car runs on Shell V Power petrol and clever mapping means that it's just as happy at idle, or around town, as it is on the motorway, and the map also adds a bit of extra fuel to keep the No 3 cylinder from running too hot – a common problem on these engines. In fact, with the ECU keeping a close eye on the cylinder head, air and

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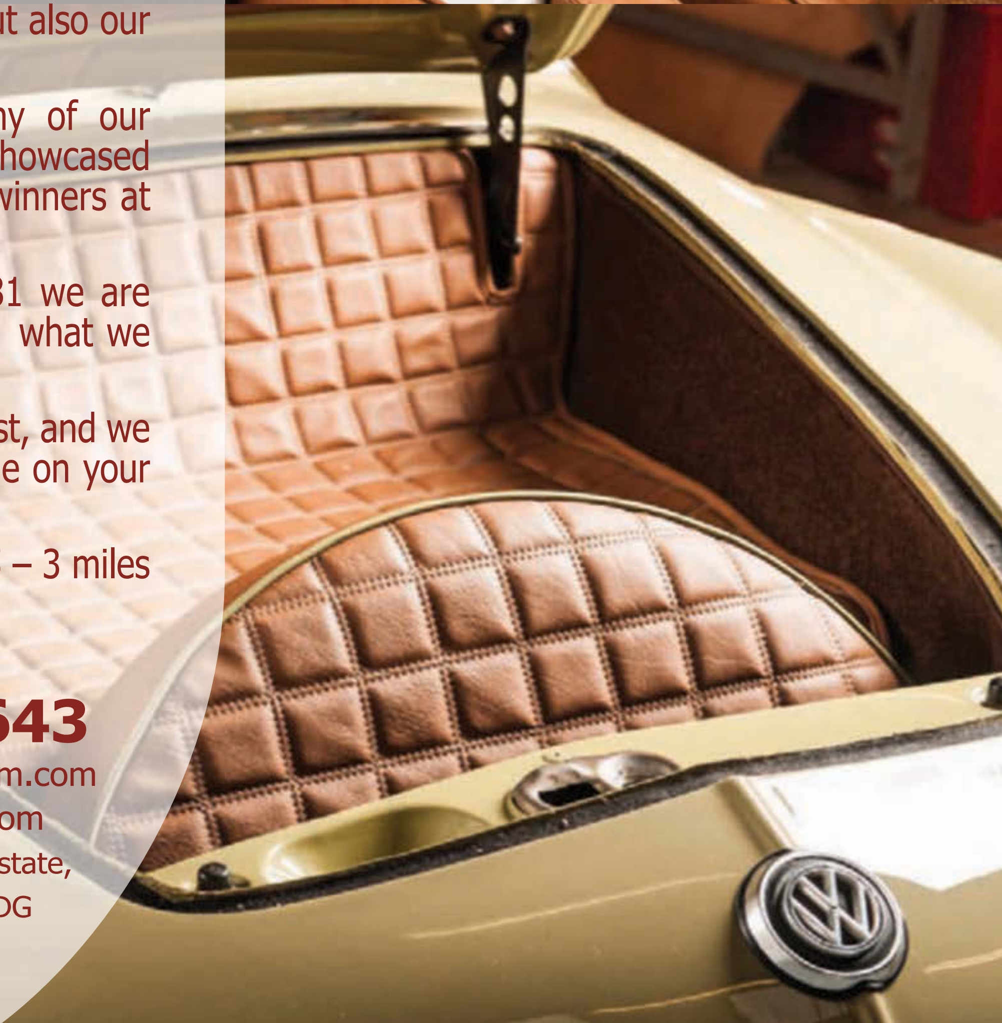

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Assembly of Type 31s from Complete Knocked Down (CKD) kits began at VW's Clayton plant in Melbourne in April 1963 – Kate's car came along shortly after

The bespoke front carpets cover up the immaculate body-coloured fuel tank; it's almost a shame to hide it

The 15in Radar wheels that Ozzy came with were kept, but were powder coated chrome and black to match the exterior colourscheme

> "It's fantastic to drive with no knocks, rattles or bangs – it's just like a new, old car"

water temperatures, it has the ability to restrict the revs and go into a 'limp-mode' should temperatures go past their safe limits.

The results of the new spec engine with the new Emerald ECU and Jenvey throttle bodies? A claimed 100bhp with 120lb ft torque and the ability to show more than 90mph on the clock, despite only revving to 5500rpm.

Jim also stripped and rebuilt the gearbox (the clutch was good enough to be used again) although to be honest he's already thinking about changing the final drive ratio so it's a bit more relaxed at motorway speeds. "It's fantastic to drive with no knocks, rattles or bangs – it's just like a new, old car and it accelerates really well," enthused Kate.

This photoshoot was only the second 'real' drive for the car, its first being Dubs at the Park, although it did also make an appearance at *VolksWorld* 2017 – but it was trailered to Sandown Park!

The Notchback wasn't totally finished when we saw it; Kate still has seat belts and a period radio to add before she's totally satisfied.

Despite the fact it's a joint car – Kate's husband has so far not been allowed to get behind the wheel – she's far too protective of her new toy at the moment. Mind you, that means he's got the family Split all to himself, so it's not all doom and gloom. ■

With the Notchback originating from Australia, the name seemed appropriate

Driving Ozzy always puts a smile on Kate's face and she's grateful to all the people who helped with the restoration. However, the biggest thanks really needs to go to her brother, Jim – she says she'll forever be in his debt

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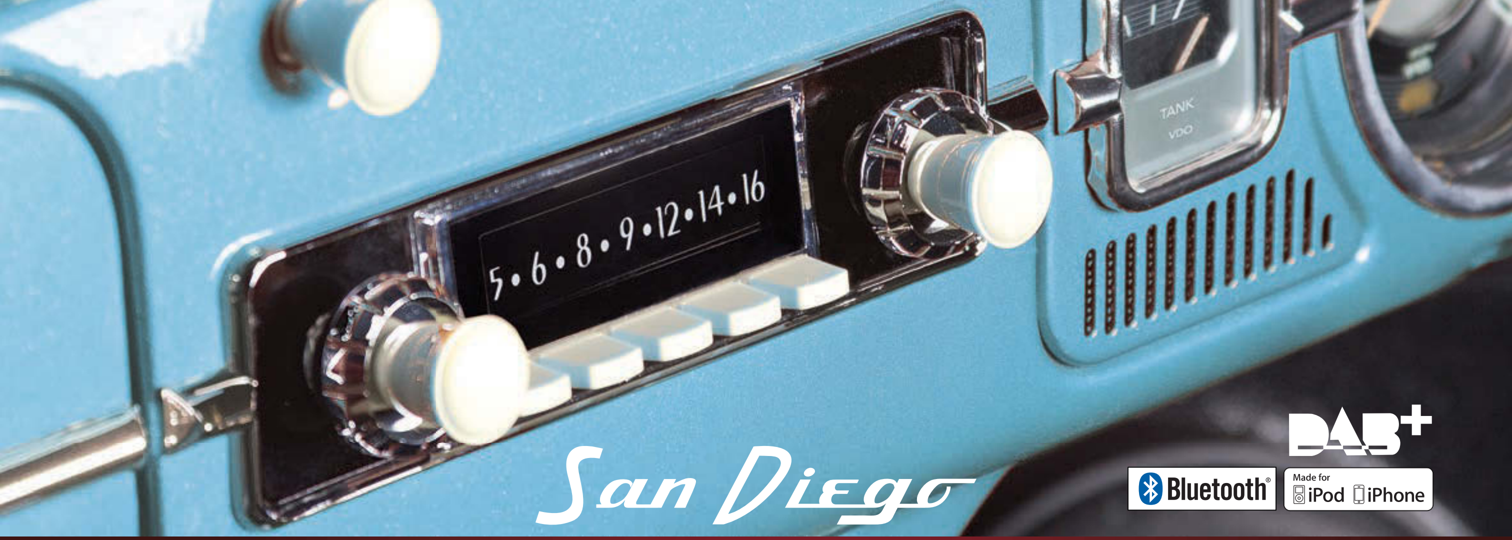
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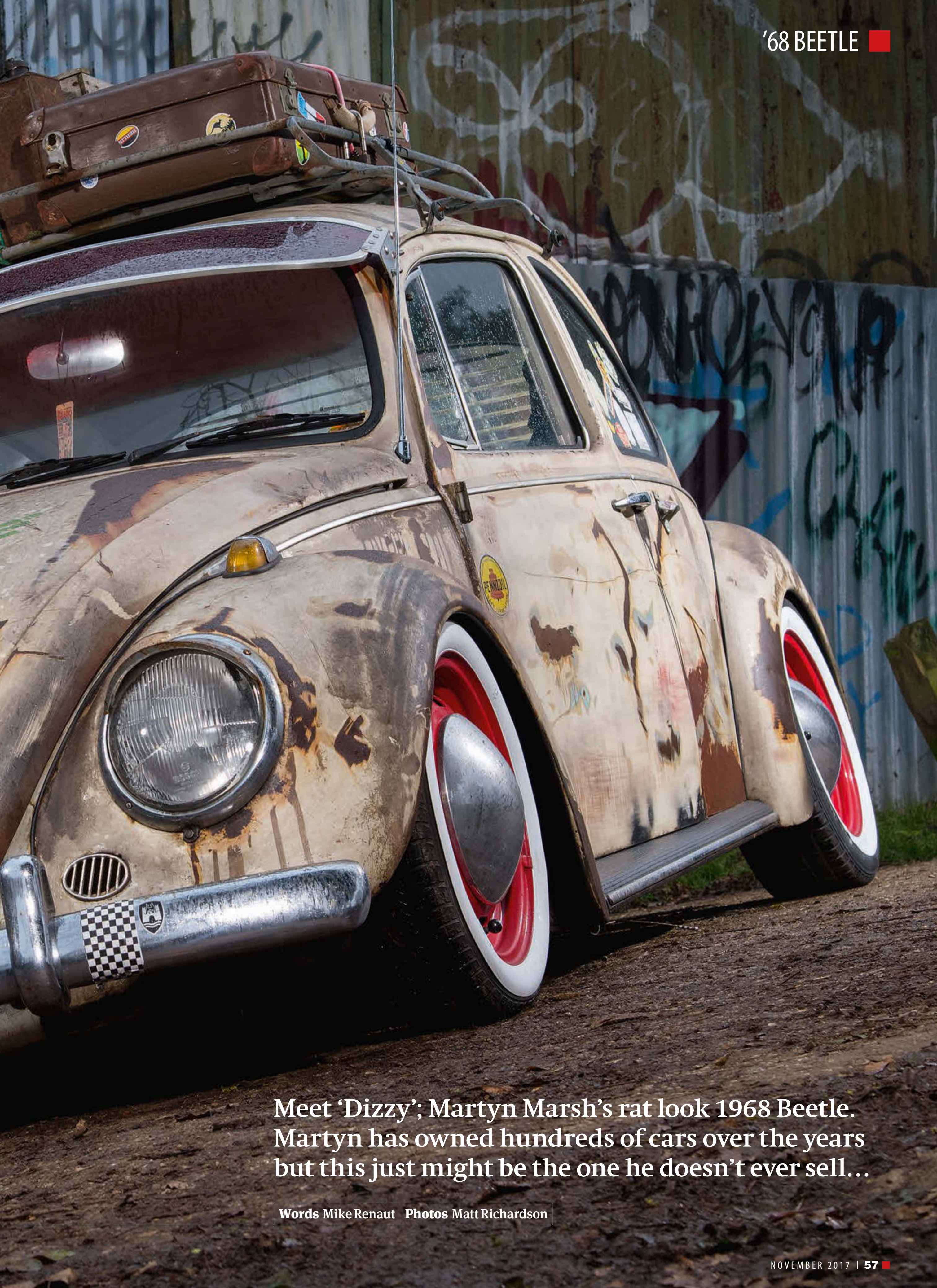
Making me dizzy



Meet 'Dizzy'; Martyn Marsh's rat look 1968 Beetle. Martyn has owned hundreds of cars over the years but this just might be the one he doesn't ever sell…

Words Mike Renaut **Photos** Matt Richardson

∧ Sufficient protection from the sun is vital; this visor is also a great way of turning everything outside the car bright red

∨ Martyn spends every Sunday morning washing and polishing his car – his other car that is. This one spends all its time being driven and enjoyed

RUSTY-RIDES

∧ Venetian blind in the rear helps with occupant privacy but also partially covers the air suspension's tank that's mounted in the back

< This is the sort of horn that goes AAROO-GAH and scares dogs

I SURVIVED THE SCRAPPAGE SCHEME

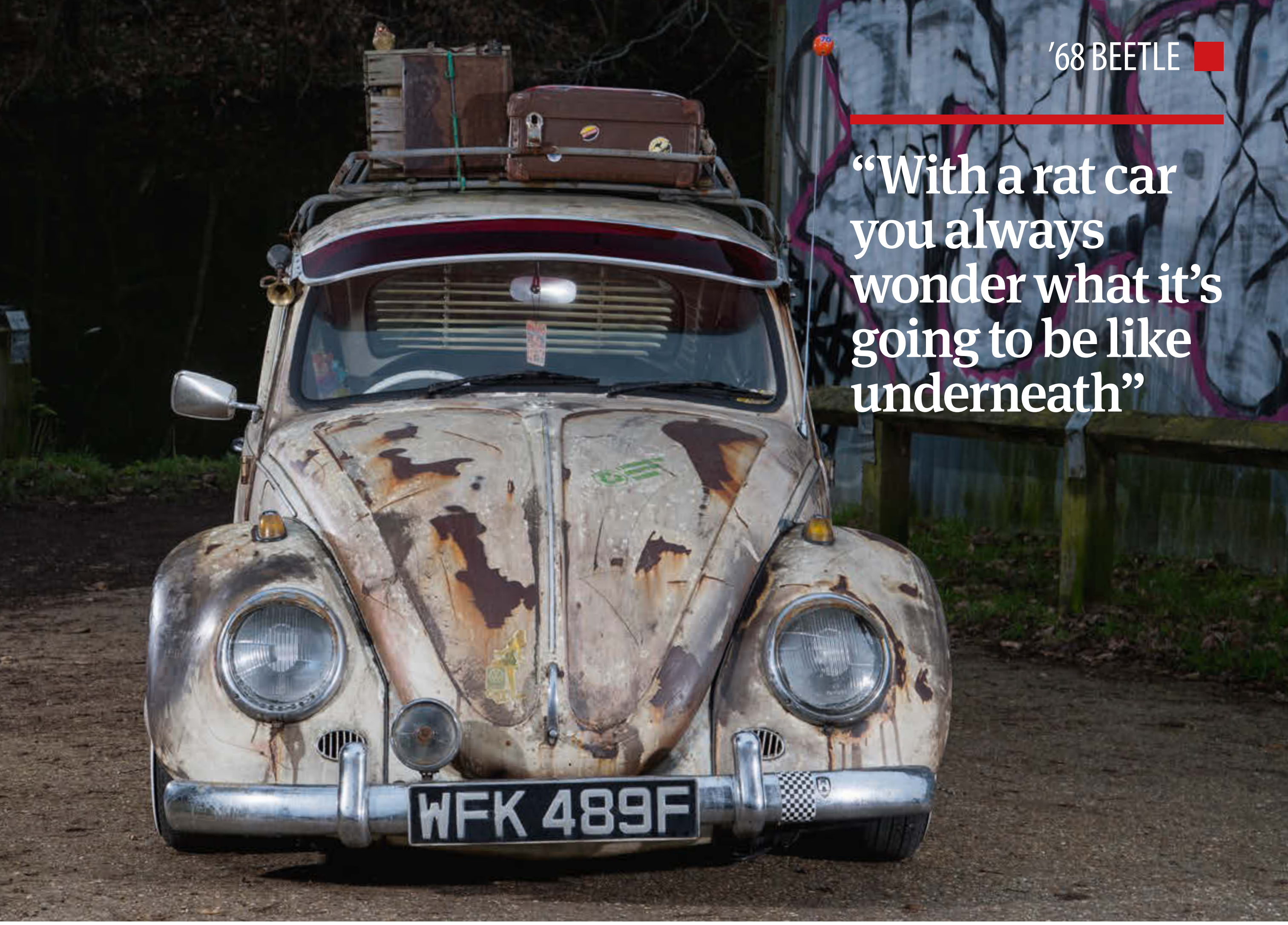
< Old cars are far greener than new ones, so fixing up an old VW is the ultimate in recycling – where's our government award for services to the environment then?

∧ The original steel wheels have been widened to accommodate these 195/70 R15 tyres. Classy whitewalls are the only thing on Dizzy's outside that aren't rusty

If you ever have a day or so to kill, you could easily fill it by casually asking Martyn Marsh, the owner of this '68 Beetle, to list all the cars he's owned over the years. "I've been a car nut all my life," he admits with a grin. "I passed my driving test in 1982 and by 1993 I'd owned my 500th car. I'd buy one, get bored of it and buy another the following week. My insurance company suggested I get a fleet policy when it took two of their office staff to lift my folder off the shelf. I've had all sorts, every available specification of Ford Escort and Vauxhall Viva, customised three-wheeler Reliants… but the first car I owned was a Beach Buggy."

Yes, like so many of us, it was a Volkswagen that started Martyn off. "I don't remember exactly what model of Buggy it was but I found it in a garden, it was a 1960s build and I suspect quite rare since it had a full hardtop body – I've never seen another since. I've actually had five Beetles before this one, and most were pretty radical. I even had a 1303."

But, as is so often the case, life put his lust for owning as many VWs as he could on hold. "I went about ten years without a classic Volkswagen, though I owned a newer Golf. I got married to Shelly, we got a house with a garage and thought it was time I had a decent car again. I wanted one that was already built though, something I didn't have to do a lot of repairs on." This 1968 Beetle fitting the bill turned up on eBay in October 2016, "it was being sold up north somewhere so I got in touch and asked the seller, James Hudson, if it was worth my making the trip from the other end of the country. With a rat car you always wonder what it's going to be



“With a rat car you always wonder what it’s going to be like underneath”

like underneath. James said to definitely come up and see it, the car was solid, there was no filler in it anywhere. He’d spent the last four years building it. When I arrived it was parked outside and as soon as I saw it I immediately knew I was going to buy it. James had barely used it since he owned a T6 and was building another Beetle for his wife. The Beetle had undergone a body-off restoration and James had even made a number of the parts himself.”

Changing Times

The Beetle was all Martyn had hoped it would be, but almost instantly the urge to work on it became too strong, “I can’t leave anything alone for long,” he confesses, “so I immediately started to make changes. Really I wanted to add some personalised touches to make it my own. I put it on an air ride suspension system by Dub on Air (see Facebook: ‘Dub On Air’) and ran the airlines throughout the car using existing holes, rather than underneath, so there was no hacking it about. The tank was fitted behind the rear seat since it’s a system where the motor sits above the air tank and it wouldn’t have fitted under the bonnet without modifications. Plus, I didn’t really want it mounted on top of the fuel tank because of the condensation – I reasoned the interior is the driest part of the car when it’s being driven. The blind in the rear window helps cover it up. The only downside is the noise of the pump, but then it’s an old Beetle so the engine is already pretty noisy to begin with!

“Shelly has christened the car ‘Dizzy’ since she says you get dizzy walking around it trying to see everything that’s been done. Since you photographed it a couple of months ago I’ve added a modified tow bar that still functions when the car is down low and I’ve built an aluminium trailer. When I got Dizzy I also put on a big bore exhaust and took off the spotlight that had been fitted to the roof rack – it looked a bit too clean. The wooden slats on the roof rack were rotted out so I replaced those, then recently found another original roof rack and that was fitted onto the trailer.” You might notice there’s a plastic rat poking out of one of the boxes on the roof, “it was scaring the local kids,” says Martyn, “so I’ve decapitated it and the head is now mounted on the new tow bar.” That should set his neighbour’s minds at rest…

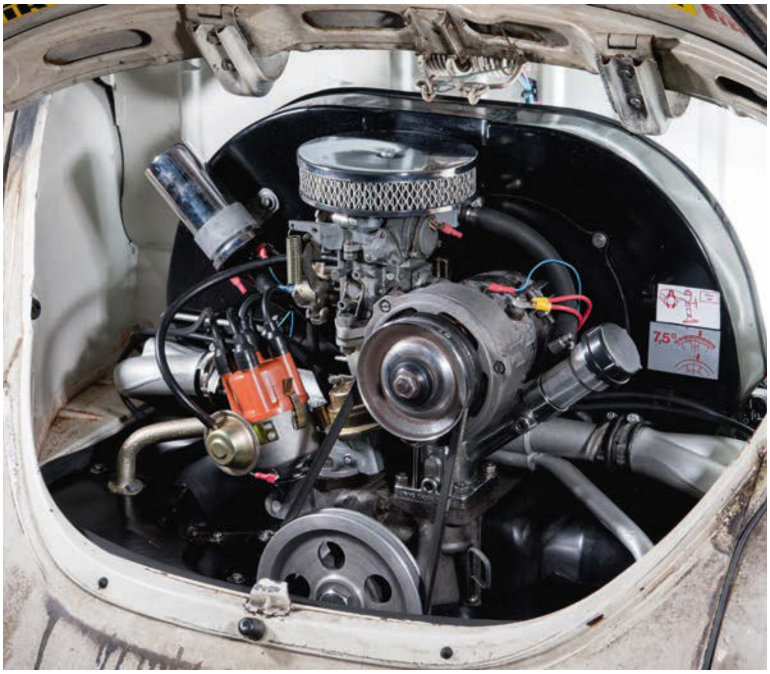
“I added a wooden crate on top to give it a look of a car that had been toured around, although I’ve fitted a waterproof plastic box so I can keep stuff dry and safe. Inside I’ve added a modern hidden radio so the original blanking plate is retained and I’ve redone the speakers.” You’ll notice that the interior is very clean compared with the outside, “I left it largely how James built it since it’s comfortable with the original seats

“you get dizzy walking around it trying to see everything that’s been done”

^ If you see this in your rear view mirror, then you’re driving far too slowly!

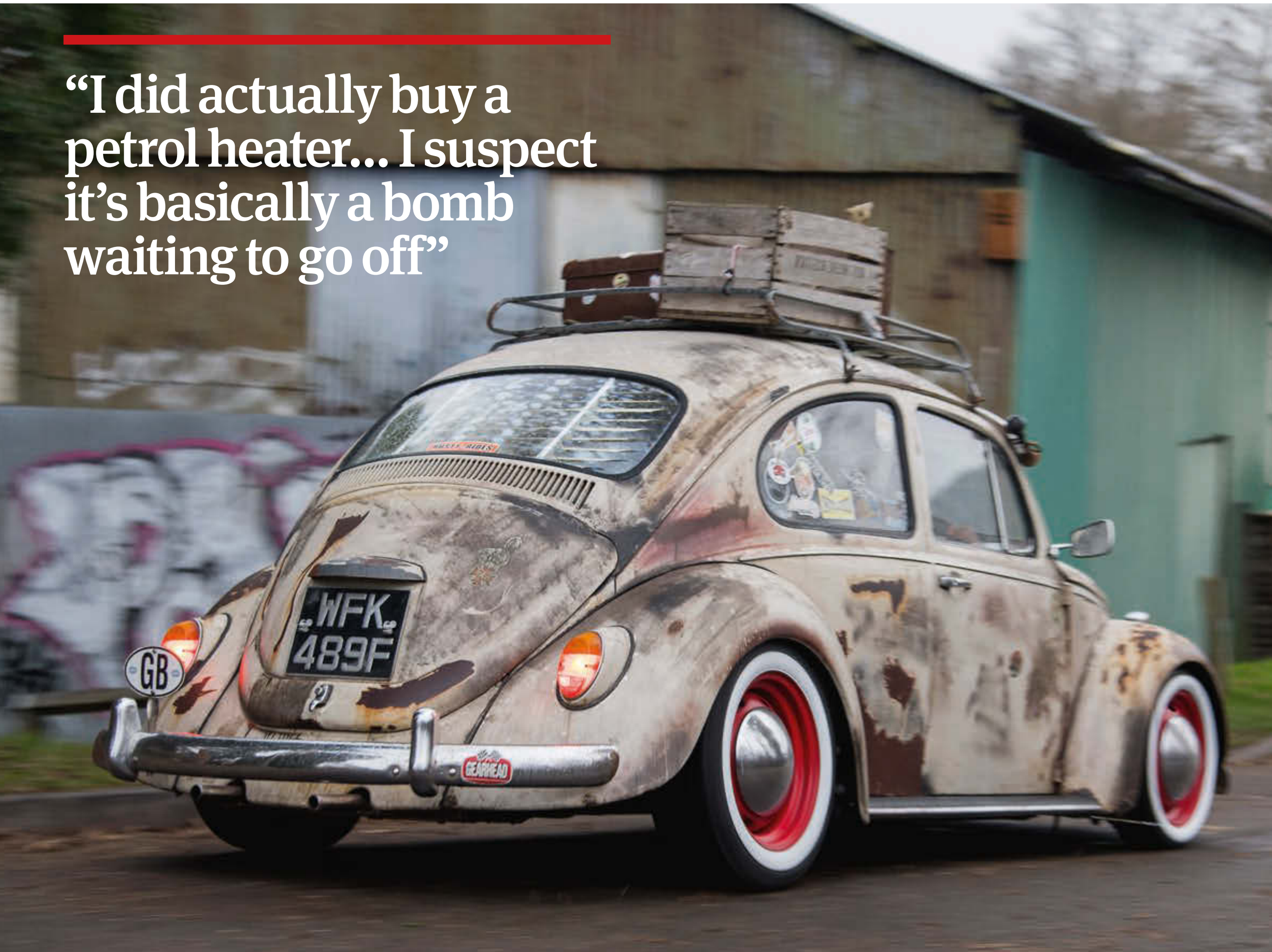
TECH INFO

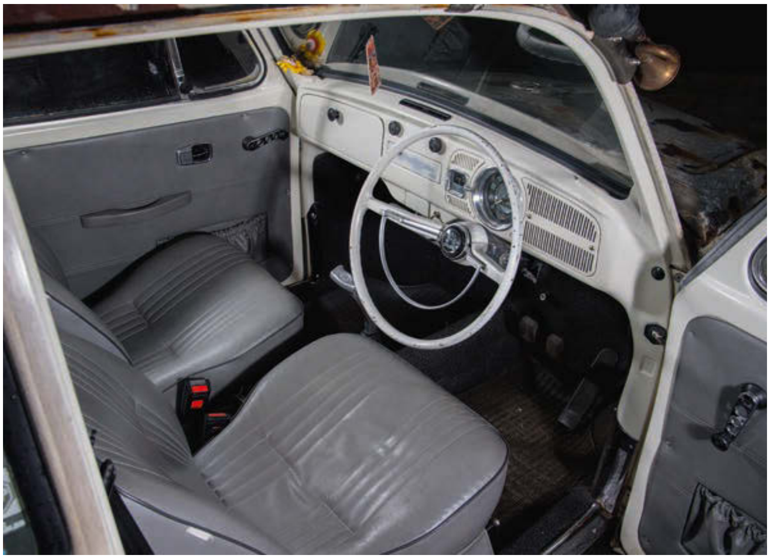
BODY
1968 Beetle saloon
ENGINE
1600cc twin port; electronic ignition
GEARBOX
Stock 1200 four-speed; Empi shifter
WHEELS AND TYRES
155/45/15 fronts and 195/70/15 rears on widened rims
INTERIOR
Stock, recovered in grey vinyl
BRAKES
Stock drums all round
SUSPENSION
Air suspension from Dub on Air



^ You'll note that in complete contrast to the exterior the engine bay is immaculate. It might be a stock 1600 but it goes fast enough

“I did actually buy a petrol heater… I suspect it's basically a bomb waiting to go off”



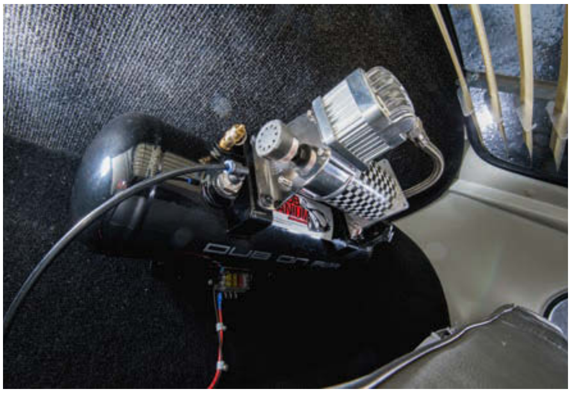


Crikey, that's a different car isn't it? No, we haven't used the wrong photo because Dizzy's inside is a lovely, clean place to be. No tetanus shots required here

That's Martyn there – for someone who's owned over 500 cars he seems a surprisingly normal sort of fella. Just imagine all the hours he's spent filling out V5 forms…

Collectors of *The Beano* look away now! The boot area is partially decoupaged with old editions of the comic

It's not all factory stock though; Empi shifter is a cool touch even if it only stirs a stock 1200 gearbox



Dub On Air supplied this set up but it's no dancing and hopping lowrider, the air suspension just gets it low down in the weeds and raises the Beetle up enough to avoid pesky potholes and speed bumps

It looks like it's been dragged out of a swamp, until you look more closely. Most non-VW people don't understand why you'd work so hard to make a car look like this but that's part of the fun isn't it?

on the factory mounts." Seatbelts are fitted front and rear. Martyn also added to the various stickers and decals already on the car.

Martyn's Beetle is powered by a 1600cc twin port that's been rebuilt but retains the stock internals. "Considering there's drum brakes all round I think it already goes fast enough; it's fitted with a stock 1200 gearbox and acceleration is actually pretty good – and it drives really nicely, like a new car. It's surprised a few people away from the traffic lights, but it's running out of power around 80mph. In some ways that's perfect for UK motorways. I might put in a narrowed front beam in the future, because on full lock it's a bit tight and can peel off the whitewalls."

> "it's driven all year round, I think of it as a rolling work of art"

Electric additions

It was fully rewired by James with relays all through so there's no electrical issues there and he's in the process of adding an electric screen washer since the factory system often leaks. "There's also no heater because the heater channels are blocked up and Waxoyled, so I'll fit a heater before next winter too," he explains. Which then reminds Martyn, "I did actually buy a petrol heater at the Slough swapmeet, I tried it and it filled my garden shed with fumes. I suspect it's basically a bomb waiting to go off so I'm going to sell that on. Besides it would need an exhaust pipe exiting under the front wing."

The boot area is partly decoupaged with old issues of *The Beano* comic, which is a nice retro touch. "I'll probably do the entire boot that way and make it look like one big panel. I've also put early wing mirrors on the bug now and got rid of the door mirror. It's another load of money and effort just to make them rusty – crazy, but I love doing it! Most recently I found a brass flap with 'GAS' written on it so that's now fitted on my petrol flap – it seems to be the part that most people comment on.

"There's lots of restored Volkswagens about and quite a few rats," says Martyn, "but look closely, and they're all a bit different. I love the California sun-bleached look on an old Volkswagen, and James covered the metalwork in anchor wax so it won't ever get any worse. I use the car mainly for local shows but it's driven all year round, I think of it as a rolling work of art that I'll keep adding to over time, although I do love it just as it is. I'd never paint it shiny to look like every other restored Bug, I've owned shiny cars and you're scared to leave them anywhere. I'm careful with this one and obviously I don't want it damaged, but if some idiot does open his door onto it in a car park it's not the end of the world.

"People seem to like Dizzy, old ladies come over to look at it and say they remember them, then usually say something like 'this hasn't got much more time left on the road though has it?' I try to explain the rat look concept to them but they refuse to believe this rusty look is deliberate!" ■

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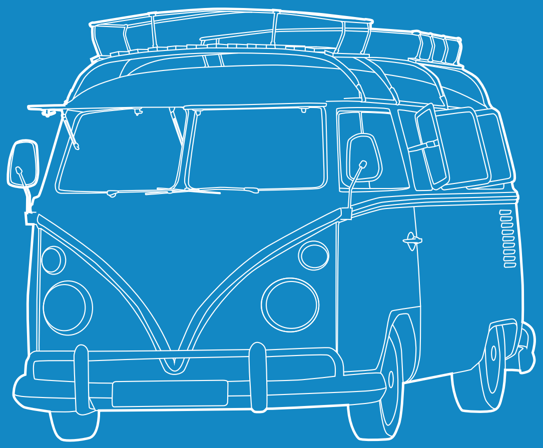

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Winning formula

Sometimes it pays to stick with what works best, which is why people continue to flock to Spa every August

Words and photos Dave Warren

Believe it or not it was the 25th edition of Le Bug Show, and although visitors weren't blessed with quite the same wall-to-wall sunshine of last year, it still went down as being one of Europe's biggest VW gatherings. In fact, as always, the sheer scale is mind-blowing.

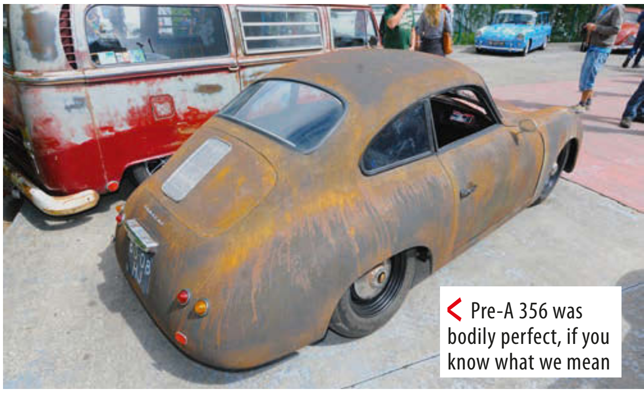
Close to the German border, Spa is home to the Francorchamps F1 circuit and is set in beautifully wooded countryside in the mostly French-speaking region of Belgium. The show itself is organised by the Belgian Buggy & VW Club and led by Paul-Yvon Duffieux and Serge Loxhay who always have a great band of helpers on hand to make it run smoothly from start to finish.

Visitors arrive as early as Wednesday morning to secure the best camping spots and to be near the action; some of the tree-lined camping fields offer shelter from the heat of the midday sun and a cool retreat late at night. The show officially kicks off on Friday, the admission charge is based on the type of vehicle you're in, whether it's air- or water-cooled. Well, you can't say fairer than that can you? The entertainment starts that evening in the event's main marquee which hosts the entertainment throughout the weekend with music going on until the wee hours.

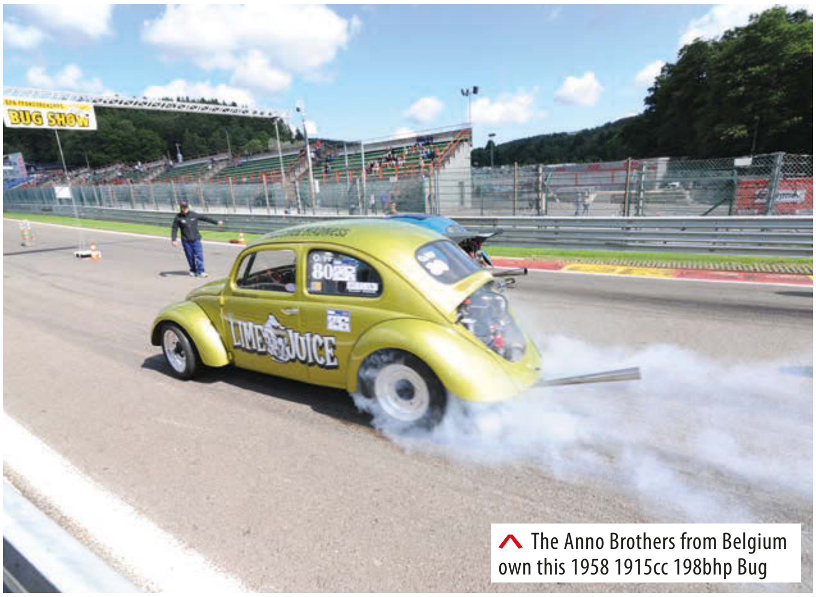
> “the sheer scale is mind-blowing”

Track action

From Saturday you're free to wander around the paddock from 8am, with access via the under race circuit tunnel, the demo racing on the track starting soon after. Anyone can take part but registration is required in advance via the show's website and roll cages and helmet



< Pre-A 356 was bodily perfect, if you know what we mean



The Anno Brothers from Belgium own this 1958 1915cc 198bhp Bug

We'd like to see this sometime soon on *Police Interceptors*

> “the admission charge is based on the type of vehicle you're in, whether it's air- or water-cooled”

DREAM MACHINE

Baby Bug driven and owned by Inaki Castillo Alfonso

Obviously this Belgian couple chose Spa for their honeymoon

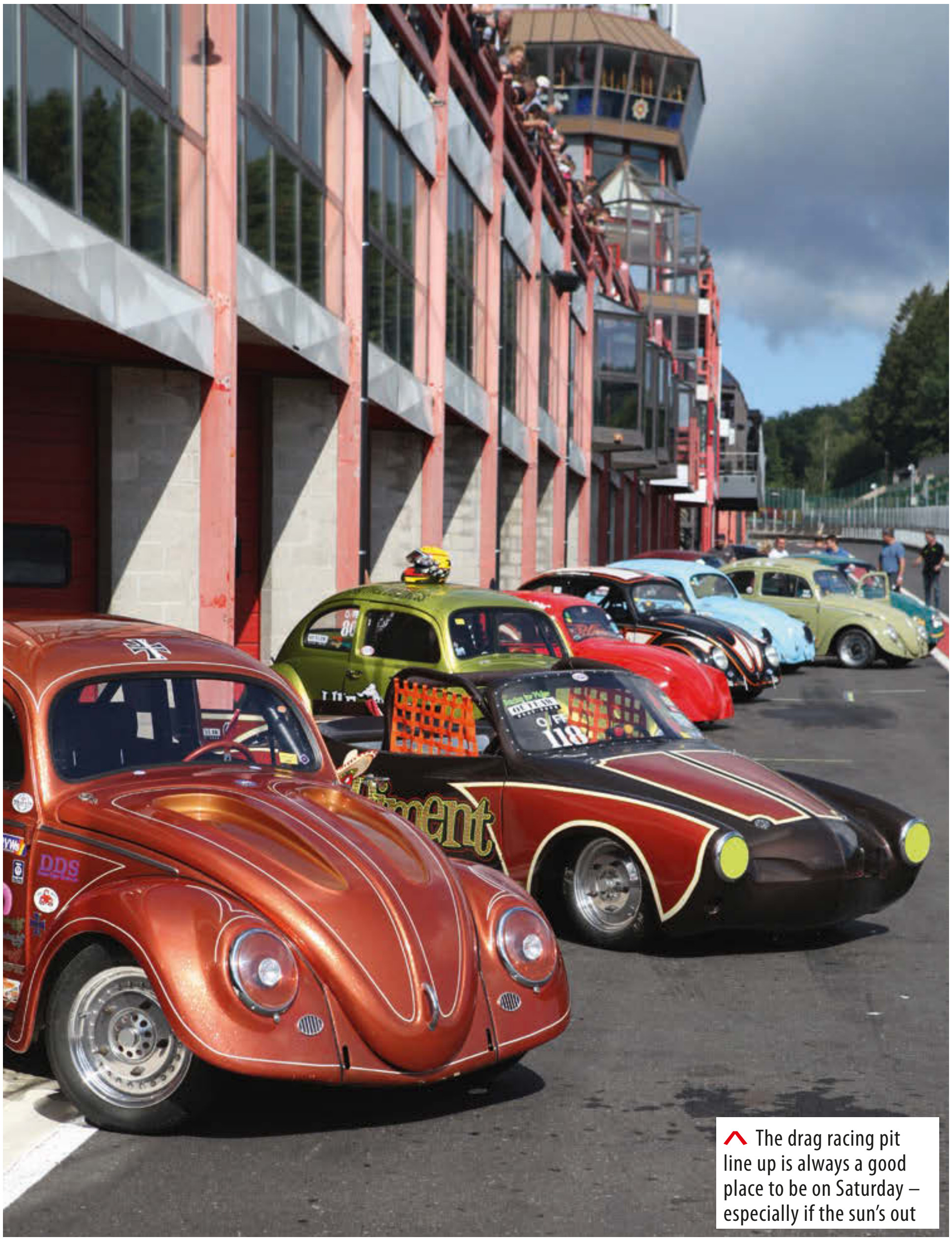
YOU ARE AMAZING
FBI

Silly sunglasses were courtesy of Volkswagen Finance but we dare you to apply for a loan with these on

We've seen Gulf Racing Beetles, Ghias and even Squarebacks but this Type 4 looks the most authentic

If you want it, they'll have it in the extensive autojumble

Eric van Dooren from Holland with his Best of Show 1957 Ghia



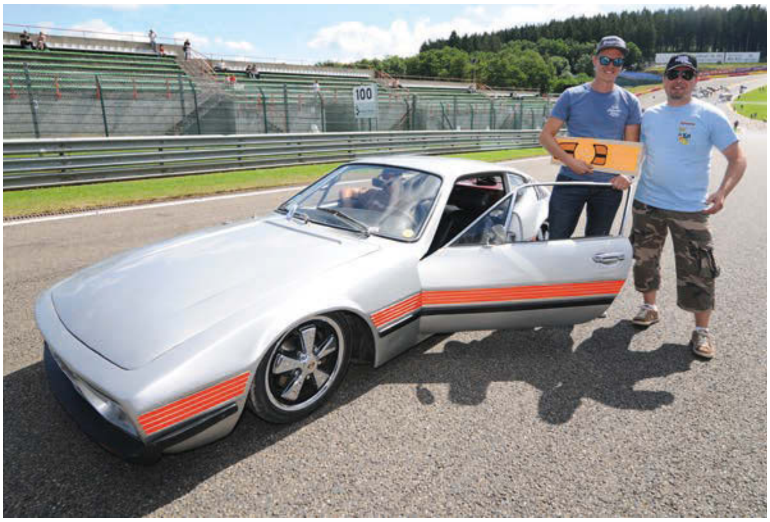
The drag racing pit line up is always a good place to be on Saturday – especially if the sun's out

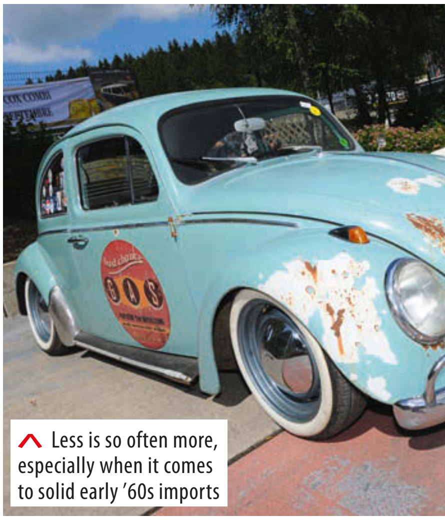
The Live2Drive crew from Malaysia drove for nine months around the world in their VWs but enjoy the limelight at Spa

The Radical Bugz line up from Belgium

Ar
with

We loved Martin Hobé's '72 SP2. Its tarmac scraping stance has been achieved with a Volksprojects air ride kit, 4-in narrowed front beam and adjustable extended spring plates at the rear. It's running on 4.5J/6J Fuchs from Flat4. "With so much room in the bay, it's craving a 2100cc engine," says Martin. Sadly though he's selling it to fund his '57 Oval Cabrio project

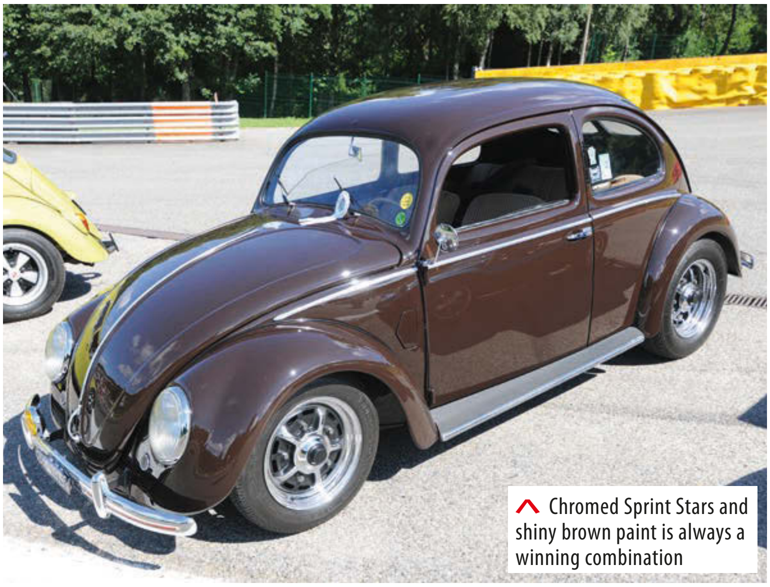




Less is so often more, especially when it comes to solid early '60s imports

The paint on this early Ghia was stunning – and are they 18in split rim Teledials?

Safari effect kinda suits this workhorse 181



Chromed Sprint Stars and shiny brown paint is always a winning combination

ndy Bugs' 21-window Samba
lan Wheeler at the wheel

are obligatory. The slower races start after 10.30 with a pace car holding people back and keeping everything under control. Space soon runs out as hundreds of classics wait to take their turn; no strict order is in place, so you'll see a mint original Split Screen Bus next to a Rat Look Bug and everything else in between.

Meanwhile, a mouth-watering display of VWs can be viewed on the lower levels and surrounding car parking spaces below the trade stands and lined up outside the race garages. High above the stadium is the Pit Stop cafe which commands a fantastic view across the track and of the TV screens showing the rest of the track action.

The buffet lunch at €15 is worth a visit so keep an eye on the menu board.

That's entertainment

Demo drag racing takes place on the home straight and really gets the crowd going as cars from all over Europe show what they can do. Then there's the crazy creation driven by Christian Van Larken – it's basically a VW-powered go-kart that can pull wheelies at the drop of a hat and can hand brake turn at speed. It entertains the crowds every year and boy does it give one thrill of a ride.

One thing not to miss is the Grand Parade that only takes place on the Saturday afternoon and lasts two to three hours with people sat on roof racks and generally hanging off cars any way they can, soaking visitors with a water pistol being a common objective. Double Cab Pick-Ups are ideal for this purpose as people can sit on the back to get a good shot and enjoy the views. Some vehicles even have Christmas music playing which is all a bit odd in the August heat. Seeing rows of classic cars driving around the track is an amazing sight and provides a great photo opportunity. People were encouraged to keep moving but it was a hard task to stop people pulling over to watch other cars drive by.

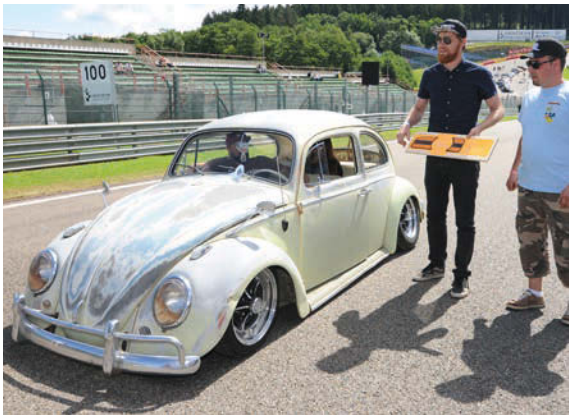
> “the Pit Stop cafe which commands a fantastic view across the track”

The furthest travelled award should have gone to the group of VW fans from Malaysia that we reported on in our October issue who were rightly presented with a special trophy.

Saturday evening provides everyone with another chance to enjoy the entertainment in the main marquee. A nice touch this year was to have a lanyard sponsored by French parts

There is no keeping Christian Van Larken on the ground with his shortened VW-powered creation

We're feeling the love for Renoud Valk's Beryl Green '63 Deluxe US import. Those are Buick wheels you know...



Rush hour in Spa, except this is one you wouldn't mind being held up in…

> Some vehicles even have Christmas music playing which is all a bit odd in the August heat

specialist Dream Machine and EMPI California that could be charged with credits to pay for drinks at the bar.

Sunday feeling

With Sunday coming around all too soon the sound of classic air-cooled engines fills the air as the camping fields empty and Beetles, Buses and other classics return to the car park to go on display or get some track action.

Sunday's highlight, of course, is the Show and Shine and the quality was as high as always. The compere for the awards is Jean Marie Meersman and awards include a very snazzy EMPI shifter presented by the firm's Joni Makepeace. Before the award ceremony the cars are all taken onto the track and lined up along the Raidillon bend, the famous curve featured in many an F1 fight out. Afterwards there's numerous photo opportunities as cars are driven down one at a time and the owner presented with a trophy. There's more drag racing before the show finally comes to a close at 4.30pm – although, unsurprisingly, many stay on and make it into a long weekend before heading back home.

For those who have yet to do a European show, this one comes highly recommended. If it is your first time, join a club or group as safety in numbers always pays. The roads in Belgium are well signposted so if you do a few mechanical checks before you go and carry a few spares on board, getting there becomes all part of the fun. ■

You can almost feel the funk when looking at this colourful Notch. This car was on EMPI eight-spokes with whitewalls previously

It's the real thing, you know

From at least 12 different countries people queue to do a circuit of the track

Bugs don't get too much lower than this

Check this out for an eclectic collection of classic VWs

Dutchman Roel Verhagen celebrating the fact that he owns such a lovely Type 3 Ghia

Not sure if that's quite legal, but it's the national drink of Belgium you know

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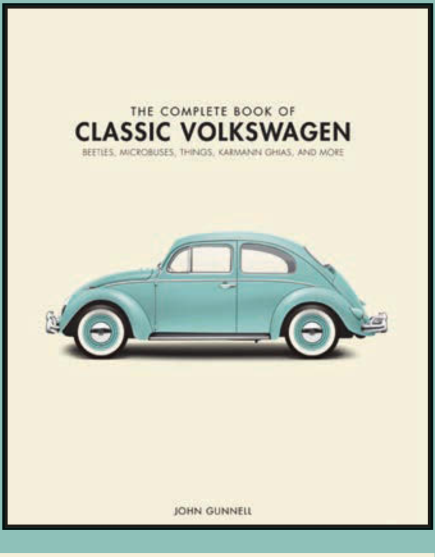

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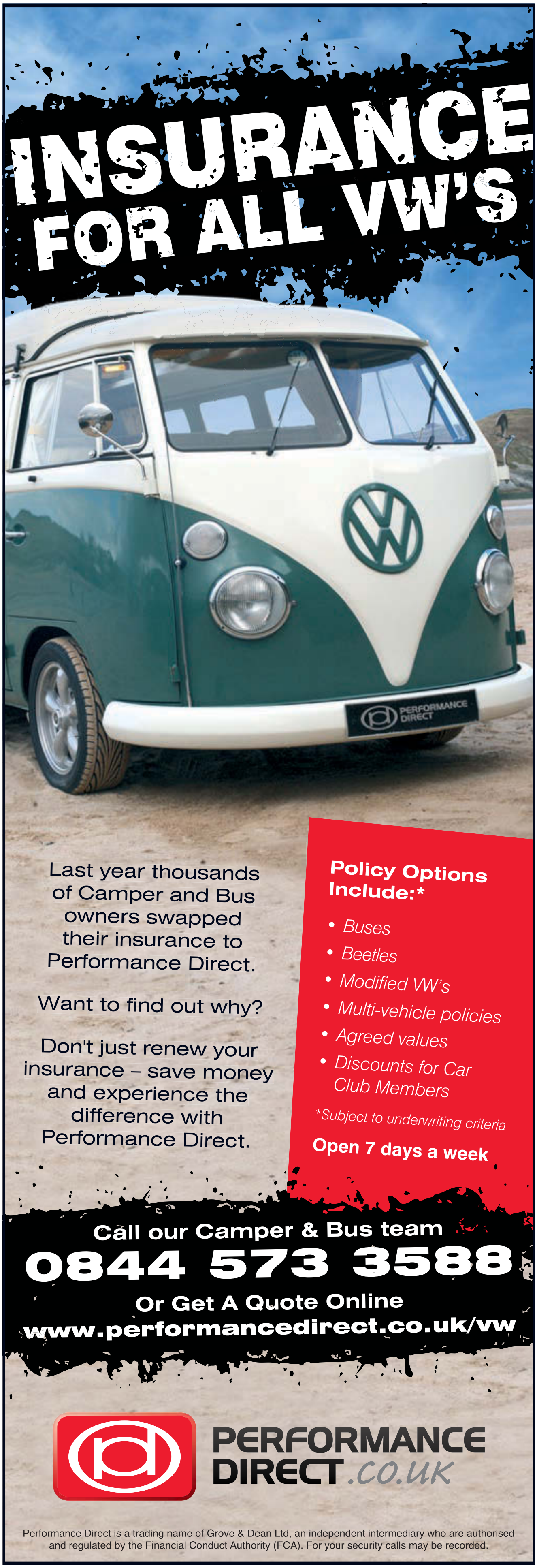

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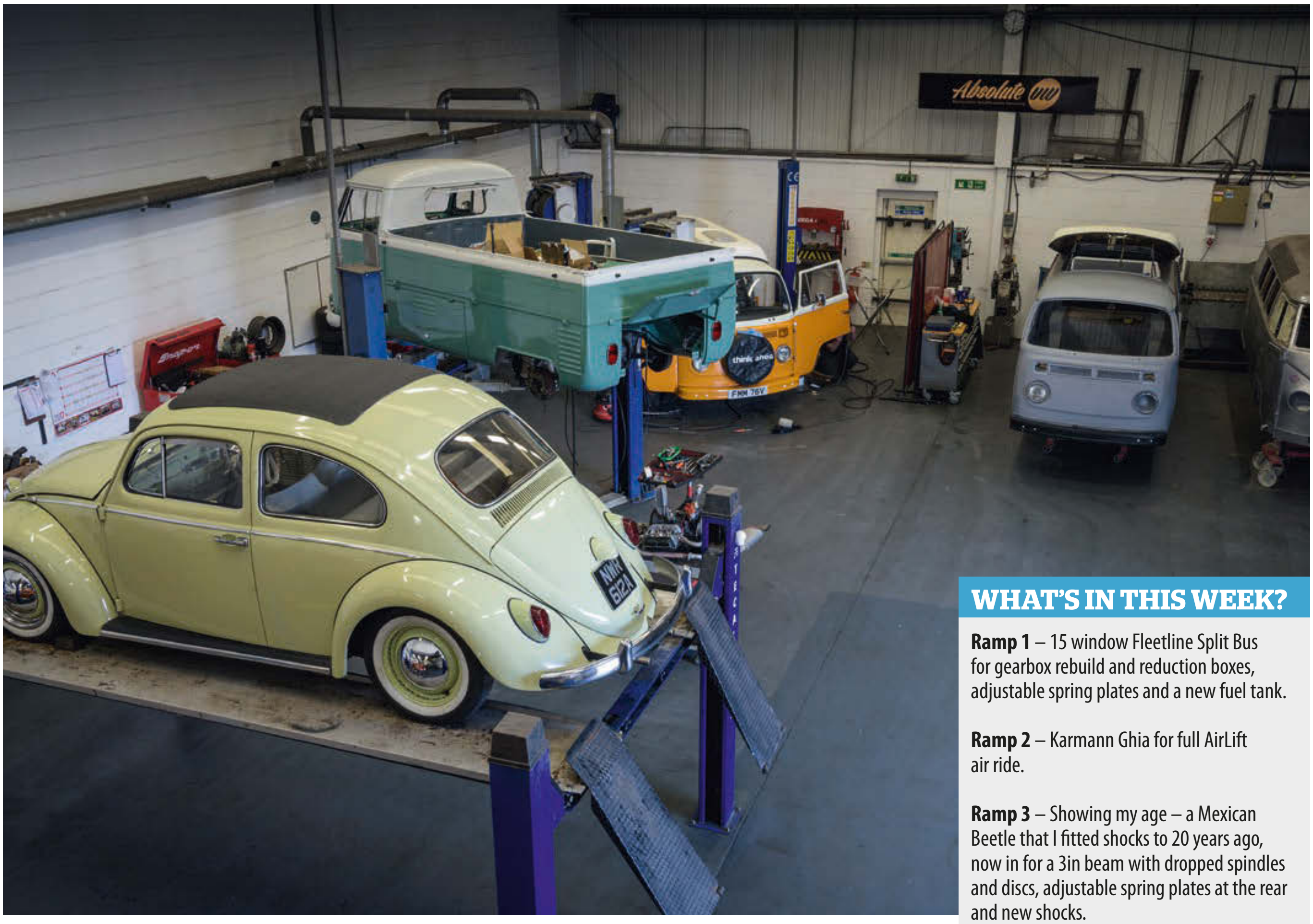
Absolutely fabulous!

Having made quite a splash with their display of cars at this year's *VolksWorld* Show, we met up with Simon Kerr at Absolute VW and discover why he advises 'not to rush in' and how attention to detail has become their catchphrase

Photos Chris Frosin



WHAT'S IN THIS WEEK?

Ramp 1 – 15 window Fleetline Split Bus for gearbox rebuild and reduction boxes, adjustable spring plates and a new fuel tank.

Ramp 2 – Karmann Ghia for full AirLift air ride.

Ramp 3 – Showing my age – a Mexican Beetle that I fitted shocks to 20 years ago, now in for a 3in beam with dropped spindles and discs, adjustable spring plates at the rear and new shocks.

Ramp 4 – 2009 T5 in for general servicing, including turbo pipes. We fitted this with Accuair E-Level and HP Drivetech suspension a couple of years back along with huge eight- and six-pot brakes.

Ramp 5 – Split Smiths custom converted Split Screen Bus mobile bar project – check out their facebook page at www.facebook.com/splitsmiths

Resto 1 – South African 11 Window Split, full dip to bare metal and re-panel.

Resto 2 – Twin slider Bay, full dip to bare metal resto, chassis strengthened for turbo engine etc.

VolksWorld: **Howdy Simon, so where are you based?**
Simon Kerr: *We are in Castle Donington in the East Midlands. It's a great location with easy access to the A50, M1 and M42 and also has good rail links with Long Eaton and Parkway stations close by.*

We had our first unit here in 2006, but moved to our current 5000sq ft modern, fully-equipped and secure workshop six years ago.

VW: **Sounds nice and central. So how and when did you get into restoring old VWs? We've heard things are going great guns...**
SK: *Like a lot of people, my first car was a Beetle which I restored before legally being able to drive. Whilst working at an air-cooled specialist I 'traded up' to a Bay Window which I later restored and showed at The* VolksWorld Show. *It also appeared in your September 2005 issue – it was a brown and cream Bay with hibiscus flowers on the roof. From then on there was only one career and now, some 12 years on, I have a team of five experienced VW mechanics working to the same principles as I started with; quality workmanship, attention to detail and customer satisfaction.*

VW: **What's in your workshop at the moment?**
SK: *The five ramps are always full with a selection of everything from MoT work, basic servicing and engine upgrades through to fitting air ride. We always have at least two full nut-and-bolt restos on the go at any one time.*

VW: **So what's your take on the current air-cooled scene, what's good – what's bad?**
SK: *Okay, let's get the negative out of the way; the trend towards social media pictures making poor*

Variety is the spice of life, and that certainly holds true with this Donington specialist

With serious kit like this in their workshop, it's no surprise to learn that they can tackle all manner of specialist body fabrication

Much of their work centres on making historic VWs do what they always did, but a whole lot better…

> We always have at least two full nut-and-bolt restos on the go

quality work look 'cool'. Quality workmanship endures, whether photographed or not.

What's good is seeing more young families getting the VW bug and enjoying the freedom of a camper. This last year or two we have seen a growing number of new owners with young children wanting to make their Vans both reliable for their trips away as well as making them more child friendly. Adding rear seat belts, Webasto heaters and entertainment packages are high up their wish list of modifications.

***VW:* So tell us about the worst bodge or silliest fix you've seen.**

SK: *This question would take a whole publication to cover. We are always amazed at the varying degrees of poor workmanship. I'd say fitting shiny accessories above replacing perished fuel lines is high up the list.*

***VW:* We understand there's been a shift away from the cheap fix ups to full nut-and-bolt restorations – have you witnessed that trend?**

SK: *There are certainly more enquiries for full restorations, but for most owners that means losing their vehicle for a considerable time – and to do it well you need fairly deep pockets. We have a lot of customers where we have formed a phased restoration plan over a number of years to spread the cost and to keep them on the road for the summer season. This works well and the*

Bespoke engine builds focus on giving Buses a bit of extra push up the hills

No, it's not a local VW club meet – it's Absolute VW's personal parking lot

restoration process can still be completed to a high standard but at an affordable pace.

VW: **What is the most popular engine upgrade you do?**
SK: *We complete a lot of engine replacements. Although we fit engines from reputable suppliers, most of our customers prefer their engines bespoke to order. Being scratch built we can offer both the standard replacement sizes but also cater for the larger displacements required to push heavy, fully-laden Bay Windows up hills with ease.*

Although we have completed several Type 4 rebuilds this year, the most popular at present is a 2.1-litre Type 1 style engine with external oil cooler and custom fabricated air scoops.

Twin carbs are always a popular upgrade along with electronic ignition and performance exhausts. Sometimes, however, poor performance is simply the product of poor servicing and set up, so before completing any 'performance' upgrades we complete an engine assessment to ensure the upgrade is required and will live up to expectations. Our experience of the varying quality of aftermarket parts also lets us guide our customers to the best solution.

VW: **In your opinion, what's the most underrated air-cooled model out there? What do you think is going to be the next Split Screen Bus?**
SK: *I think the more important question is what will we be allowed to power our beloved Split Screen Buses with in the future? Electricity/hydrogen?*

VW: **What do you think of Patina or Rat Look? Do you prefer your cars shiny?**
SK: *As the scene develops and trends change we enjoy the increased variety of work each one offers. We have completed shiny nut and bolt restos (see Texas Dixie in October 2017* VolksWorld*) and Patina'd exteriors with a full shiny resto hiding underneath. I'd be hard pushed to decide on my favourite, but as long as people are out there enjoying them, for me, it doesn't really matter!*

VW: **What do Absolute VW do that's different, or unique to other restorers?**
SK: *We have a genuine desire to improve and maintain classic Volkswagens to the highest standard – every day. We have a flexible bespoke attitude to collection and drop off arrangements and are always happy to take customers to and from the train station or, as in the case of a customer from Scotland, to East Midlands Airport.*

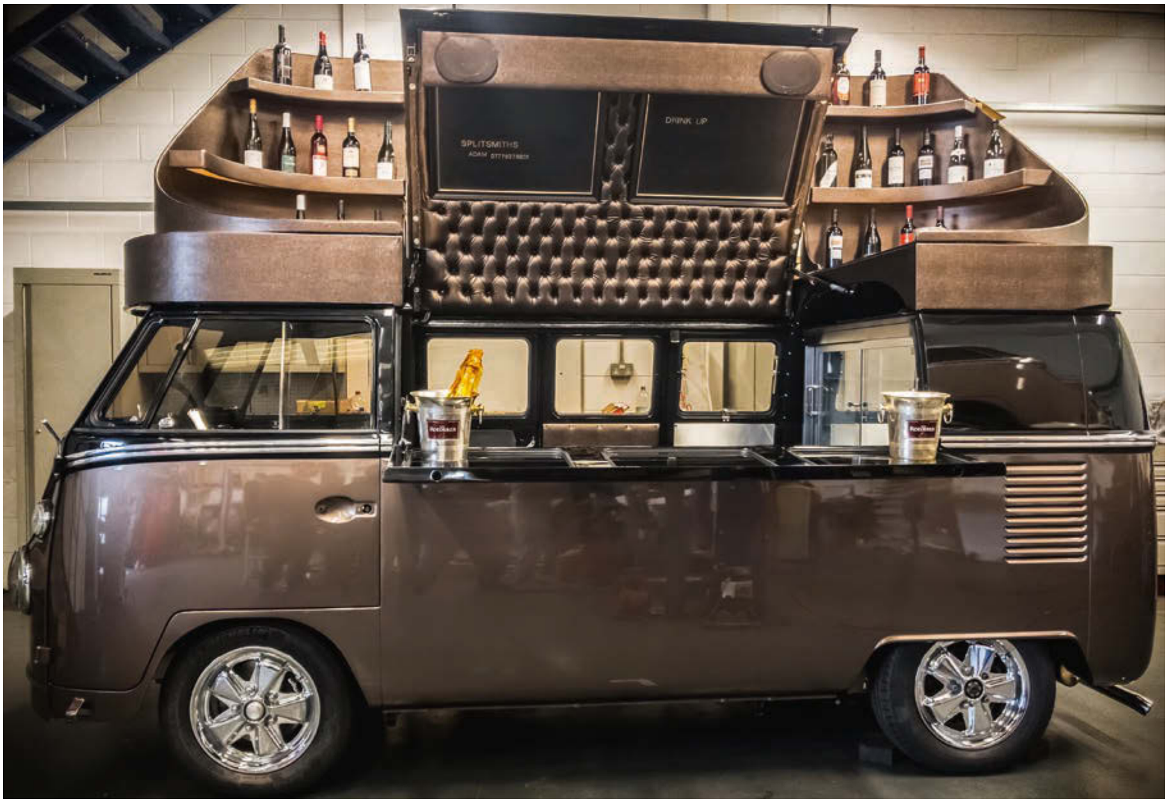
VW: **What advice would you give to anyone wanting to get into the VW world?**
SK: *Don't rush in! There are always a good number of Beetles and Buses for sale so do your homework on what you want and what to look out for. Then invest some time in going to look at a few so you get an idea what's out there. That way, when*

MD Simon Kerr loves the fact that more young families are getting into the scene

Simon getting the timing just right, in more ways than one

you find the one that's right for you, you'll know straight away. Unfortunately, it is all too easy to get carried away on internet auction sites.

If you can it is best to get some advice from someone who knows their stuff before committing to a purchase. Over the years we have done many full, on-the-ramp pre-



Custom bar project created by Absolute VW for splitsmiths.co.uk

> “Quality workmanship endures, whether photographed or not”

How cool is this as a work's van?

purchase inspections which allow buyers to buy with confidence, negotiate or just walk away from what might be a bad purchase.

VW: **What is the best thing about your job?**
SK: *Not many people get the opportunity to make their hobby a full time job and be able to work with like minded people with a passion for VWs. Everyone that works here is on the same page when it comes to attention to detail and friendly service. But the best thing for me is hearing from customers about the trips and the adventures they have had in their VWs. We're fortunate to have lots of loyal clients, excellent specialists and suppliers and a great team who make this such a good place to work.*

VW: **What shows will you be at in 2018?**
SK: *We intend to be at Stanford Hall and The VolksWorld Show, where we are looking to debut the Split Smiths bar project, as well as a few others.*

VW: **What else is in the diary for 2018?**
SK: *Completion of our two current restorations both of which are well under way and to complete the revamp of our '54 Barn Door Pick-Up shop truck with 2332cc fuel injected engine and air ride.*

VW: **If you had to use three words to sum up what you do or your business ethos, what would they be?**
SK: *Attention to detail.* ■

CONTACT

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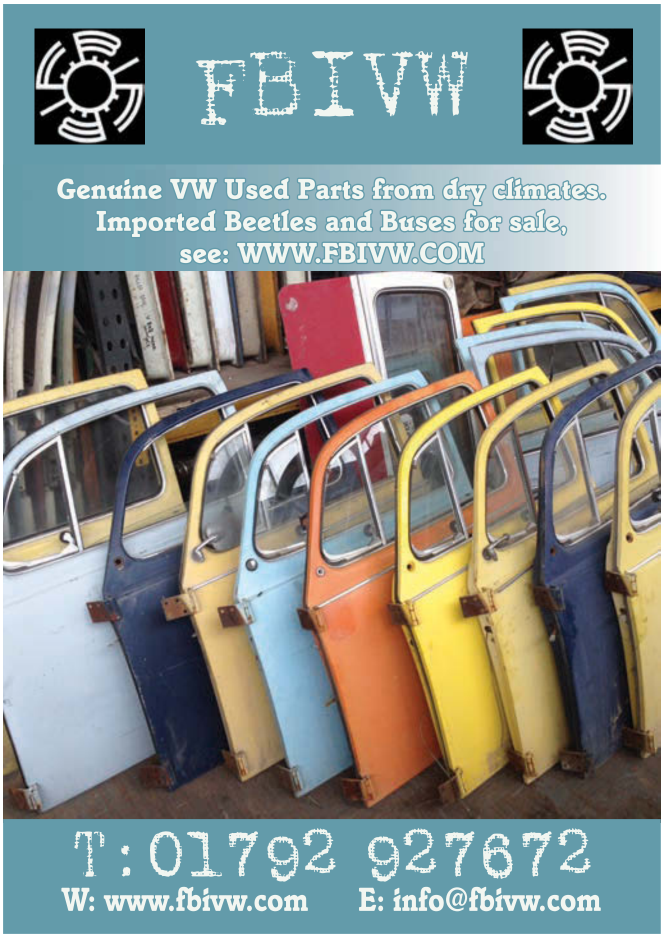
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Bringing it all back home

Just about everyone's doing it these days, so why aren't you too? If you fancy importing a VW yourself, here's some insider advice from import veteran Mark Walker

Photos Mark Walker

Whichever way you look at it, buying any VW takes a pretty large investment of cash these days. Time was when you could save a massive chunk of money buying a VW from Europe, Australia, or the USA. The problem now is that good cars are becoming pretty scarce the world over and sellers realise that us crazy Brits (and now most of our European compadres) will pay a lot of money for any old VW. That said, there are still gems to be found, especially if you're willing to take on a project with no engine/gearbox, or possibly even paperwork anomalies, which are fairly easy to iron out, if a little time consuming/risky. Here's a potted guide then, from seeing your dream car for sale on the Internet, through to getting it here and UK road legal.

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Intuition/gut feeling

SKILL LEVEL
3

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From £1,000 for shipping

Buying

Buying any old VW sight unseen takes quite a leap of faith. This means you have to be thorough during the buying process and realistic about the fact there's likely to be more faults/work required than you expected. Most states in the USA, for instance, still don't have any standardised MoT style tests, so if a vehicle is registered for road use, it can be driven even if the brakes don't work, or the wiring/lights are broken. Testing is more stringent in Europe, but this doesn't help if you are buying a project that's been off the road. With many cars, the suspension/steering/brakes/wiring often need repair or a full overhaul unless you have assurances that all these areas have been addressed, so allow some room in your budget for work to be done. The overruling advice is always buy the best, most rust-free body you can. Everything else may cost, but it pales in comparison with restoring a rusty 'shell.

Unless you have some contacts, most deals are done online, with the bulk of classic VWs being bought/sold through the classifieds section

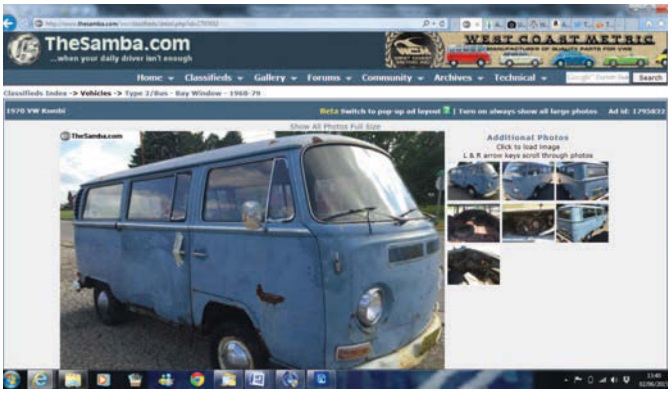
Despite everyone getting more savvy when it comes to the value of old Dubs, there's still lots of good cars waiting to be discovered

of www.thesamba.com. Other sites, such as www.leboncoin.fr in France and www.blocket.se in Sweden also have a lot of traffic. Once you have found a car, by far the best way to make contact is by 'phone. Speaking to the seller in person shows you are genuine (not a scammer), and you can reassure them that the process will be as straightforward as selling a car to a local buyer. It will also enable you to get a better gut feeling. If they seem cagey, unwilling to reveal details about the car or unsure of the facts, then continue your search.

With the phone contact established, ask for more/clearer pictures. Again, if there is a reluctance to send them, ask yourself why.

So, what pictures should you ask for? (US translation in brackets.) Generally, ask for clear pictures of the VIN numbers; engine (motor); interior, including cab and rear; chassis (frame); sills (rockers) and close-up pictures of the body and anything that looks at all suspect in the photos. Watch out for carefully cropped/misshaped images that come through. What could the vendor be trying to prevent you from seeing?

The golden rule when going to the trouble of importing a car is always buy the best, most rust-free body you can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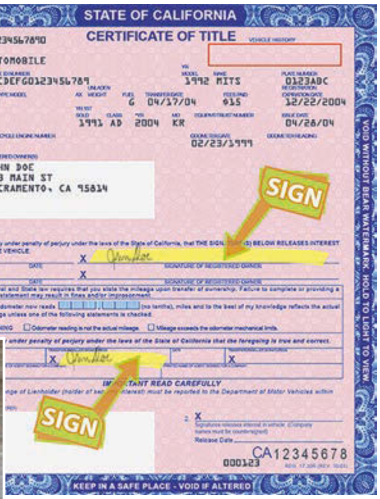
TheSamba is still the biggest source of Stateside bargains

You'll need a title certificate to legally ship a vehicle out of the US



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

CERTIFICATE OF TITLE

01234567890

AUTOMOBILE

ABCDEFG0123456789

1992 MITS

0123ABC

4D

G 04/17/04 $15

12/22/2004

1991 AD 2004 KR

04/28/04

02/23/1999

JOHN DOE
123 MAIN ST
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814

I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, that THE SIGN... BELOW RELEASES INTEREST IN THE VEHICLE.

X John Doe

X

Federal and State law requires that you state the mileage upon transfer of ownership. Failure to complete or providing a false statement may result in fines and/or imprisonment.

The odometer now reads ☐☐☐☐☐☐ (no tenths), miles and to the best of my knowledge reflects the actual mileage unless one of the following statements is checked.

WARNING ☐ Odometer reading is not the actual mileage. ☐ Mileage exceeds the odometer mechanical limits.

...under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

X John Doe

X

IMPORTANT READ CAREFULLY

...of Lienholder (holder of security interest) must be reported to the Department of Motor Vehicles within...

2. X

Release Date

CA12345678

000123

KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE - VOID IF ALTERED

SIGN
SIGN
OUT BEAR WATERMARK. HOLD TO LIGHT TO VIEW.
VOID WITHOUT BEAR WATERMARK. HOLD TO LIGHT TO VIEW.

Always ask for more pictures and get a shot of the chassis number so you can use it to confirm the vehicle description being given

One of the early questions to ask concerns paperwork. The US version of our V5 document is called the 'title', often referred to as the 'Pink Slip'. If a car has no title, it is now illegal for it to be shipped out of the United States. The title will need to match the VIN numbers on the car too. Many cars with lost paperwork/titles are much cheaper and you, or your shipper, can usually go through the process of getting a new title issued at a small cost, saving yourself a lot of money. But you need to be aware; the process takes time (possibly a couple of months), so if your shipper is doing this, check that they won't be charging you daily storage while you wait for it. More worryingly, during the searches they do to issue a new title, the vehicle may flag up as being stolen, then you will have lost the vehicle and your money.

In Europe, at least for the moment, things are much simpler, especially if the country you are buying from is in the EU. With cars from the EU, paperwork is not as much of an issue, but can still give you a few headaches when it comes to registering your car in the UK.

If you can't bring yourself to take a leap of faith buying something unseen, then spending money on a flight and a couple of days accommodation, or getting a local specialist to check out a prospective purchase is money well spent and could save you making a huge mistake.

One final note on buying: never assume anything – check every fact and every detail yourself before taking the plunge.

Paying for your purchase

There are a few payment options open to you, with varying degrees of risk. Generally speaking, once the money has gone, it's going to be pretty difficult to get it back, but there are ways of sending money that ensure you are sending to a real person, with a real address. Sure, you could use Western Union, or Paypal, but their protection policies don't cover vehicle purchases and you don't really know that the name given is genuine. Far better to do a wire transfer through your bank. This means that the person at the other end has given you their real name and has a bank account registered at their home address. It will still be very difficult to get your money back, but should everything fall apart, it gives law enforcement a place to start.

You could always suggest an Escrow service. Money is held in a holding account until the buyer is happy with the item purchased, but any vendor may be wary of this, especially as the vehicle faults can be interpreted differently.

Instruct a shipper

Shipping a car from the USA or Europe may seem like a difficult and scary process, but it really doesn't have to be. Sure, you can choose a shipper based solely on price, but I assure you (and I have used a few different shippers) that this will usually turn out to be false economy. The shippers I recommend are good at communication, know all the rules and loopholes and make the whole process easy from start to finish. If you want to save a few pennies, then try CFR Rinkens in Paramount, California (www.cfrline.com) who have been in business a number of years and are reliable. They will send you pictures of your purchase when it arrives at their facility and are based near the port of Los Angeles.

Whoever you use in the USA or Europe to ship/transport a car, I would recommend Kingstown Shipping (www.kingstown-shipping.co.uk) as the UK clearing agent, especially if customs paperwork is needed. Mark, Steve and the team there are very knowledgeable and are great guys to boot, who have even got me out of trouble in the past when I foolishly used another agent who tried to make me pay too much tax! It may cost a few pounds more, but Kingstown can handle the whole process with just a couple of phone calls, from getting the car collected from the vendor and transported to the docks, to clearing it through UK customs.

If buying from the States, you'll need to organise road transport to get your new purchase to the docks, although often it's best to get an agent to arrange everything

When buying from Europe, you can always drive home – if you're brave enough

Payment, if shipping from the US, is often required up front for the road transport and ocean freight.

You could always choose to head over to Europe with a trailer attached to a suitable tow vehicle, or fly in and drive home a car if you're brave enough; most classic insurers will provide cover on the chassis number until you have the car MoT'd and UK registered.

If you do gamble on doing the drive yourself, get insurance and take some tools (and preferably a support vehicle) in case the worst happens

Transport to the shipping company

If you have used a shipper listed above, then getting the vehicle picked up from the vendor is as simple as supplying the shipper with the address and contact details of where to do the pick up. Then you can sit back and relax in the knowledge that it will be done in due course. If you have decided to save a few pennies and handle it all yourself, then you will need a transport company, so hit Google, ask for recommendations on the forums of www.thesamba.com or try putting out a tender on www.uship.com, or www.shiply.com, where you will receive quotes from a number of transport companies.

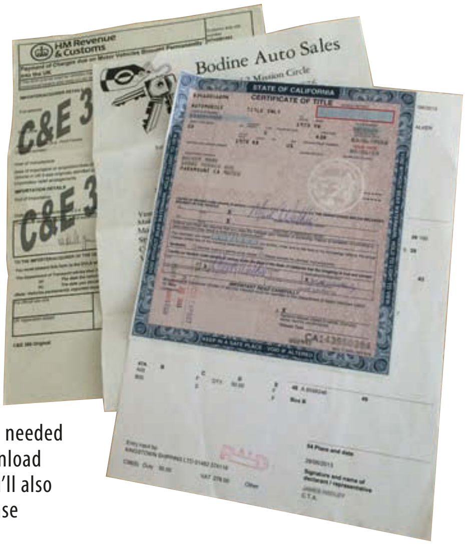
Use a reputable shipper to bring your acquisition back to Blighty if you don't want it damaged in transit

Customs clearance/HMRC NOVA

A few weeks after the car has reached the shipper, if importing from the USA, Africa, or Australia, you should receive a notification from your UK clearing agent of its arrival. You will be asked to provide a bill of sale from the vendor for customs clearance and fill in a HM Revenue & Customs form C384 (downloadable online) declaring that the vehicle is being imported for personal use. If you are VAT registered, then the process is different and your shipper will help you out with this. Once your clearing agent has received the C384 and bill of sale, they will be able to submit the vehicle for customs clearance. This can often be done the same day, but allow a few days, as it may be flagged for a customs inspection. You will need to pay the taxation amount into your clearing agent's bank account before they will release the vehicle to you for collection.

If it is being shipped in to the country in a container from another continent, such as the USA, then your customs clearance should also register the vehicle with HMRC NOVA (notification of vehicle arrivals). Find out if this will be done by your company of choice before instructing them. If you are importing a car from a European country, you will have to register on NOVA yourself within 14 days of it arriving in the UK to avoid a penalty charge. You will need to show proof of NOVA registration to the DVLA before you are allowed to register your VW.

Once your car has been collected from the docks, your clearing agent should send the US title certificate, which you will need for UK registration. HMRC will post out the C&E C386 and NOVA certificates. You will need all these documents when it comes to registering, so keep them safe.



HM Revenue & Customs

Bodine Auto Sales

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
CERTIFICATE OF TITLE

Most of the forms needed are available to download online, although you'll also need proof of purchase

New arrivals have to be registered with HMRC during customs clearance – it's something that should be done by your shipping company

Collecting from the docks

Once your clearing agent has released your car for collection, you can pick it up. The two main ports of entry in the UK are Felixstowe and Southampton, although the London Gateway port is being developed too. You can either instruct a transport company, using a website such as www.shiply.com, or hire a tow vehicle and trailer and fetch it yourself. If you passed your driving test after January 1, 1997, then you may not have trailer towing entitlement on your driving licence up to the weight of a car trailer with a car on it so check the back of your photocard licence (category BE) first.

Also, ensure the vehicle you are towing is loaded onto the trailer with the engine weight at the front (over the tongue of the trailer), or the weight bias will be out, making it a scary/dangerous experience. This means loading any air-cooled VW on backwards.

DOLLAR
DOLLAR KAFFE
FIGRO
DOLLAR KAFFE
DY53 YTX

Check your licence to ensure you're legally allowed to tow before hiring out the necessary equipment

MoT preparation

You may need to budget for a full mechanical/electrical overhaul before MoT time, even if there's no rust. At the very least, you will probably need to replace a couple of track rod ends, or check over the braking system. If importing a Split Screen Bus or a pre-1966 Beetle or Karmann Ghia, it's likely the king and link pins will be shot too, as they are tricky to repair without a hydraulic press. Even if the car you've bought is in tip-top mechanical shape, you may need to do some electrical work to bring the vehicle up to UK spec.

Split Bus:

Depending on what type headlamps are fitted, you will either need to swap the beam units for left hand dipping ones, or fit beam deflectors temporarily to pass the MoT. Some of the US spec sealed beam units dip up and down, not asymmetrically, so check what type you have first, by looking at the lens of the sealed beam units, or shining the lights on a wall or garage door whilst checking dipped/main beam.

If your Bus is newer than 1965, then you will need to swap the rear light units for European ones and put in a new feed wire from the brake light switch, as the US-spec pre '72 rear light units run one bulb for all three functions and a flashing brake light when indicating is illegal (as well as pretty dangerous) in the UK on vehicles manufactured after September 1965. Vehicles manufactured after this date will also need amber indicators.

Bay Window:

If you have an Early Bay, then the rear light procedure is the same as the one for the Split Bus, with one exception: as US-spec early Bays have built-in reverse lights above the rear light units, it is possible to wire these as indicators and use orange bulbs.

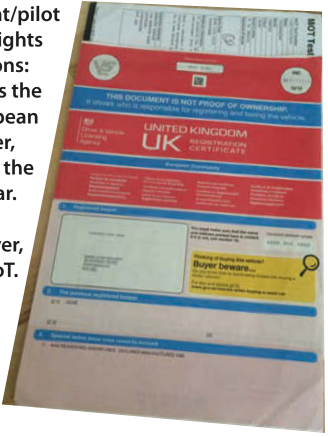
On the front of a Bay Window Bus, regardless of year, you will have to fit new left hand traffic headlamp units with a sidelight pilot/hole. This is because all US spec Bays had the sidelights in the indicator units (having amber sidelights in the UK is illegal). Before fitting the new headlamps, you will need to re-route the sidelight wires from the back of the indicator units into the headlamp bowls, so you can connect up the sidelight provision in your new headlamps.

< You'll need to sort out the lights before taking your recent import for its MoT test, but the leccy work is pretty straightforward

Beetle, Karmann Ghia, Type 3, etc:

On US imports, it is likely that the front sidelights will be in the indicators; this must be changed for UK spec, by re-routing the sidelight wires into the headlamps and using right-hand drive headlamps with a sidelight/pilot hole. You may also find that the rear lights use only one bulb for all three functions: sidelight, indicator and brake. If this is the case, then you'll need to source European bulb holders and swap the wiring over, possibly adding another feed in from the brake light switch to the rear of the car.

With this done and the rest of the mechanicals and electrics checked over, you can take the car for its first UK MoT.



MOT Test

THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT PROOF OF OWNERSHIP.

UNITED KINGDOM

UK REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

Buyer beware...

> Once you've got one of these, you're ready to roll. Getting the necessary paperwork takes time, so you just need to be patient

UK Registration

Before you can legally drive your new purchase on the UK roads (except for driving a short distance to a pre-booked MoT test/retest) you will need to register it with the DVLA in Swansea, which takes about 14 days. Although this can be speeded up by sending all your documents by special delivery and enclosing a special delivery bag for their return. To register your car you will need:

- A valid UK insurance certificate showing your name, address and the vehicle identification number (VIN). This must have at least three weeks remaining.
- A valid MoT certificate showing the VIN number.
- A valid NOVA certificate.
- A C&E 386 certificate, showing customs duty has been paid.
- The US certificate of title, or other documentation to prove the vehicle's age, such as a Heritage dating certificate from Volkswagen (http://automuseum.volkswagen.de).
- Two forms of ID for whoever is going to be the registered keeper, including a utility bill showing your current address.
- A completed form V55/5, which you will need to order online at: https://forms.dft.gov.uk/order-dvla-forms/ (information to help you fill in this form is available at: http://assets.dft.gov.uk/dvla/V355_290613.pdf)
- The registration fee of £55 plus the fee for six or 12 months road tax if the vehicle was manufactured after 1st January 1975.

It is wise to put your daytime contact/mobile number in the envelope as well, in case there are any problems.

Once you have received your registration number from the DVLA, you can use the V5C or number plate authorisation certificate to get your number plates made up, then you are ready to hit the road!

TORE BILSERVICE
070-627 77 41
INGANG

^ If you want to buy a genuine VW classic from overseas, there's still rich pickings to be had. However, all the usual caveats apply – so check everything tallies, use your instinct and don't bother bringing a car back with lots of rust

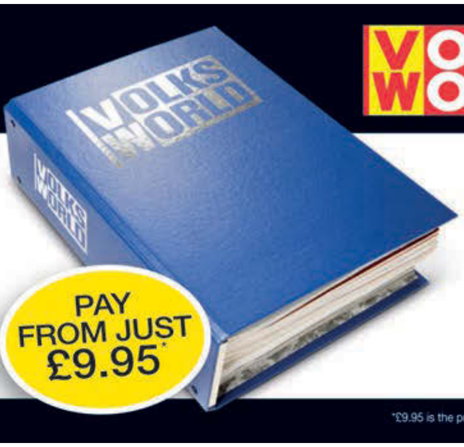
Verdict – is it worth it?

The rubbish value of sterling against the Euro has made mainland European cars a lot more expensive than they were a year ago. But because there were always more VWs there, the choice is better, and because they put less salt on the roads in countries like Italy, Spain and Portugal – they are likely to be less rusty than their UK contemporaries. We're not sure if that can be said of places like Norway, Sweden and Denmark but the survival rate of older cars must be better in those locations, which explains why those countries currently seem to be harvesting the greatest number of historic VWs.

Given the cost of repairing a rot box, buying a car with a rust-free 'shell is obviously the way to go – and Stateside, sourcing a car from a hot, dry state like California still makes an awful lot of sense. But is it worth all the agro? Well, based on a car spotted within a 200-mile radius of LA, we've worked out that you'll need to fork out roughly £2,000 to get it back to the UK and on your driveway. That might sound a lot, but when it comes to the cost of a body off restoration, it's a drop in the ocean.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Sales/classifieds sites	www.thesamba.com www.leboncoin.fr www.blocket.se
VW dealers/appraisers	www.oldbug.com www.skinnerclassics.com www.colomemotors.com www.holygrailgarage.com www.wayoutsalvage.com www.bbt4vw.com www.kieftenklok.nl
Shipping Companies	www.cfrline.com www.rinkens.com www.dfds.com www.kingstown-shipping.co.uk
Transportation (USA)	www.uship.com
Transportation (UK)	www.shiply.com
DVLA (Registration)	www.gov.uk/dvla



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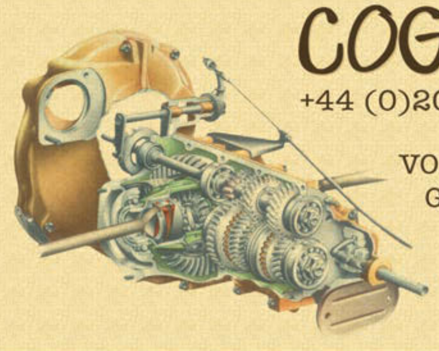

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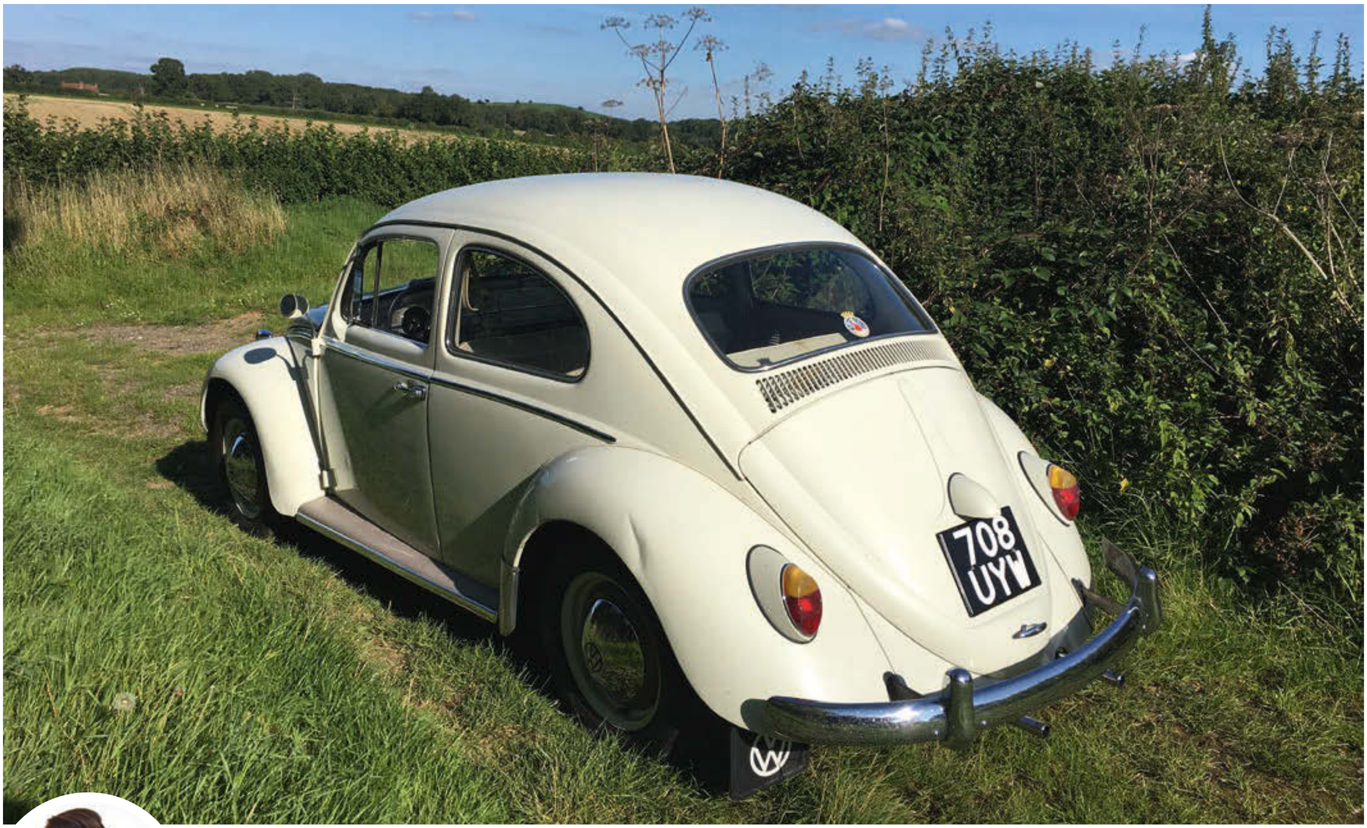
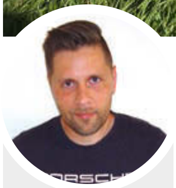


Original paint and solid where it counts. I've driven it pretty much every day since I bought it

Norwegian good

James bags himself a right pearler



OWNER INFO

NAME
James Peene

JOB
Regular contributor

CARS OWNED
'68 Porsche 912,
'69 Bay Window

WORK THIS MONTH
Fall in love with this car

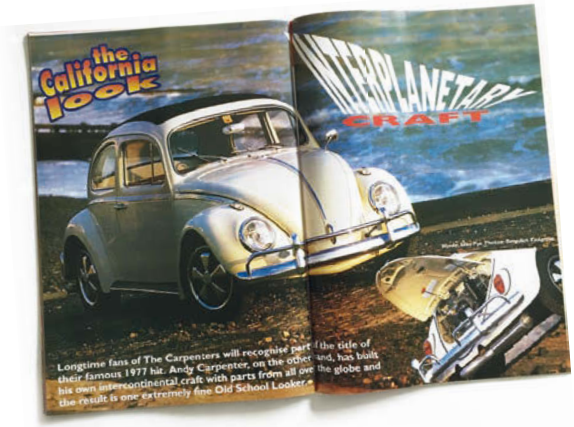
When you last heard from me I was tooling around in a heavily sun burnt Ruby Red '66 Beetle. Well, that car has gone to pastures new. The south of France, to be precise.

Whilst the '66 was a cracking car and ticked so many of my boxes, it just wasn't the one, if you know what I mean. There was nothing I could really do to stamp my own mark on it, so I decided to sell it and look around for something else.

A few likely looking candidates took my fancy, including a white '60 that was 'possibly' for sale if the owner decided to sell. Emails were exchanged and in the meantime, I negotiated a long and protracted deal to sell the '66 to a chap called Flo in Toulouse.

> "I'm tickled to death with my new purchase"

At this point, ex-art editor Steve Gosling asked if I'd seen the Pearl White early big window being sold by his work mate, Alex Noel at Just Kampers. I hadn't, but I liked what I saw from the photos and description Alex sent me, and the price he was asking.



Longtime fans of The Carpenters will recognise part f the title of their famous 1977 hit. Andy Carpenter, on the other and, has built his own intercontinental craft with parts from all ove the globe and the result is one extremely fine Old School Looker.

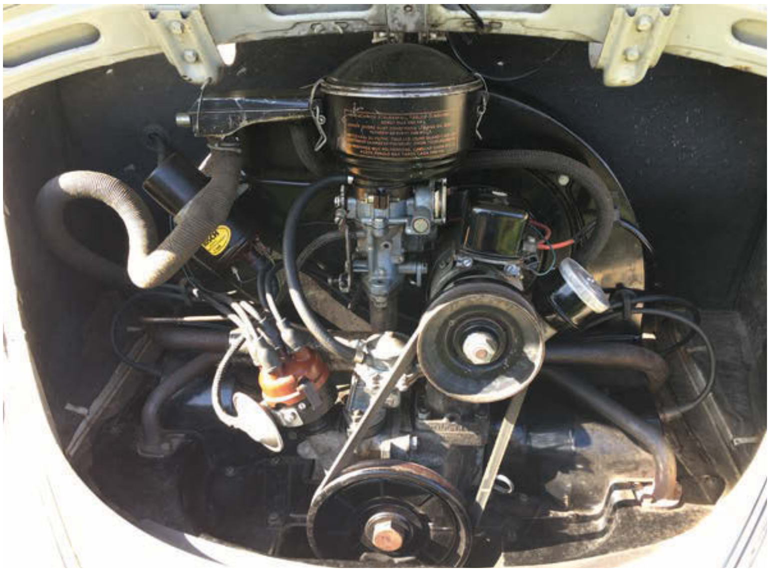
Inspiration. I've wanted a Pearl White Bug since clapping eyes on this one, way back in 1997. It was worth the wait

The stars were in alignment and I arranged to meet Flo early one morning at Gatwick airport. He'd flown in to pick up the '66 and with the deal done, I hopped on a train to Odiham where Alex picked me up. A quick nose round the car, a test drive and transfer of the funds and I was the third owner of this Pearl White '61.

To be honest, I knew it was the car for me as soon as Alex emailed, buying it was just a formality.

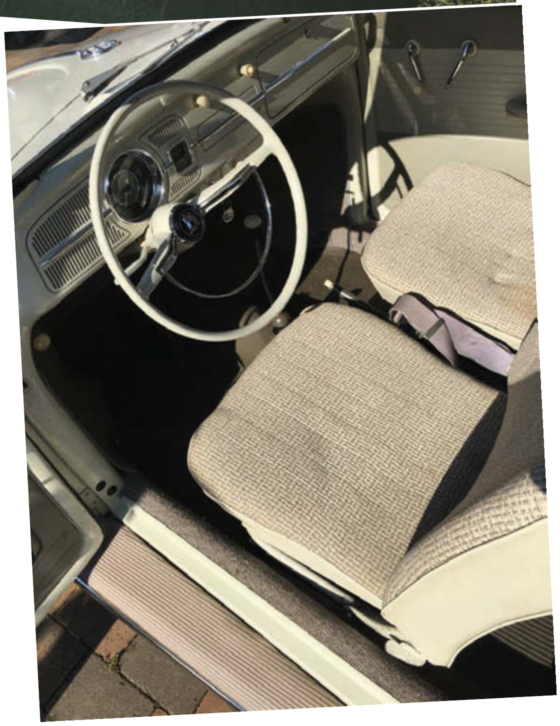
I'm tickled to death with my new purchase and in Alex's own words: "It's a lovely little car. It had one owner before me, a lady called Annie Skalstad from Kongsberg in Norway. She parked it up in 1981 and it was sold by her grandson after she passed away. Sadly, I received no paperwork with the car as it was disposed of when her house was cleared."

The dents, dings and Norwegian gravel rash all add to the character



Original 1200 engine is still running 6-volts. I plan to just leave it alone as it runs so good, although I think it could do with a new clutch

> “I genuinely think this one is a keeper”



How lovely is that cloth interior? Only the carpets have been changed for some pukka German square weave replacements

1 KRONE
10 ØRE
25 ØRE

Dealer key fob and a few Norwegian Krone that came with the car have taken up residency in the ashtray

708 UYW
JSA 423G

In good company with my Arizona import Bay

Alex did a lot of recommissioning, but left as much original as possible. It has just over 102,000km on the dial, roughly 63,000 miles. He also obtained the birth certificate from VW to confirm it's a matching numbers car.

It did have a little bit of rust in the inner wings, rear bumper irons, spare wheel well and lower rear quarters, but Alex had already done the necessary welding so you can't tell. As for the paint, it's all original, apart from the blow-ins on the quarters and the interior hasn't been touched, apart from the carpets as they were pretty worn.

I've had a hankering for a Pearl White early big window since reading about Andy Carpenter's rag top in the February 1997 issue of *VolksWorld*, (far left) and suffice to say, my Beetle will eventually look a little like his. For now, I'm just enjoying the car. Actually, make that loving it. Even the pitiful wipers and 6-volt electrics. Whisper it quietly, because I've said this before, but I genuinely think this one is a keeper. ■

I'm lucky enough to own some very cool cars, but the Beetle is my absolute favourite

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Next month...

Here's what's coming up in the December 2017 issue of *VolksWorld*, on sale Friday 17 November

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Owner Tony Martin's driveway restoration transformed this 'too ratty' '62 Double Cab Pick-Up into something much more usable

Going on Safari

We show you how to retro-fit opening front windows to your Split Bus

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VOLKS WORLD

Don't miss it!

We have ignition...

Get your electrics in rude health for the worst of the winter season ahead

Words and photos
Mark Walker

HI-BEAM
HEAVY-DUTY
TIMING LIGHT

With the cold, wet winter weather just around the corner, you really need to keep your VW's ignition system in good running order so you're not left stranded by the roadside. Old Volkswagens gained a great reputation for reliability back in the day and, if you keep up with servicing and maintenance, they will generally go on forever. However, unless you carry out a regular inspection of your car's ignition system there's a risk of everything coming to an abrupt halt, so follow our simple steps to carry out a full overhaul to prevent the worst from happening.

JOB INFO

TOOLS AND MATERIALS USED
10, 13mm socket
Spark plug removal tool
Feeler gauges
Flat screwdriver
21mm spark plug socket
Extension bar
Ratchet
Grease

TIME TAKEN
4 hours

SKILL LEVEL
2

COST DIY
From £50 for parts and materials

COST PRO
£200 approx parts and labour

01 CHANGE SPARK PLUGS The photos here are on a Beetle, as it was easier to photograph, but any Type 1 style engine is very similar, with only minor changes on the ignition parts. Looking in the engine bay to both sides of the engine, locate the spark plug leads exiting from the tinware above the cylinder heads. Remove the plug leads at the spark plug ends by giving them a firm tug. Do this and you should be able to locate the spark plugs. Using a 21mm spark plug socket with extension bar, remove all four spark plugs.

Once removed, check their condition carefully, as this can be a good indicator of the state of tune of your engine. For a condition guide follow this link: http://ngksparkplugs.com/tech_support/spark_plugs/faqs/faqread.asp

Remove the new spark plugs from the box, making sure to ditch the screw on caps, as these aren't compatible with VW plug leads. Set the electrode gaps to 0.6mm with feeler gauges before fitting. Please remember not to over tighten them. They should be torqued to 22-29ft lb.

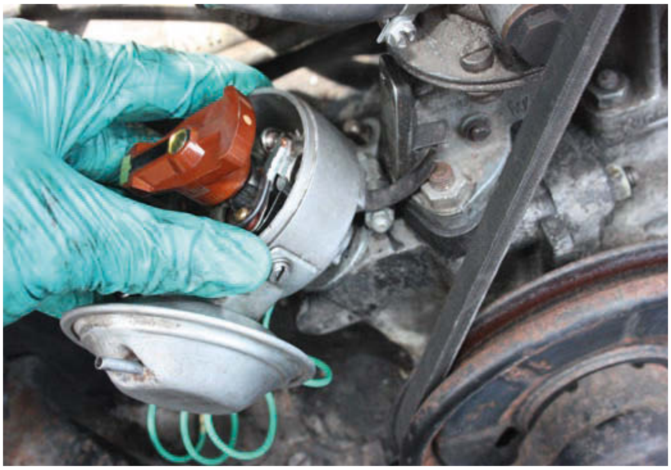
02 REMOVE DISTRIBUTOR Take a flat screwdriver and pry off the two clips holding on the distributor cap. Remove the cap and push to one side for now. There are a couple of ways to remove the distributor. If you need to check/reset the timing, then use a 10mm socket on a ratchet to loosen the clamp, before pulling the distributor body upwards and out of the engine case.

If, like us, you were sure the ignition timing was correctly set, you can just take a 13mm socket and long extension bar on a ratchet and remove the 13mm nut on top of the engine case behind the distributor, so you can remove the distributor with the clamp still attached and the timing undisturbed. In both cases, make sure to inspect the distributor shaft seal for wear, as, if worn, this will allow oil to leak out.

03 CLEAN/STRIP DISTRIBUTOR Give the distributor a good clean first and foremost – use plenty of degreaser and get it as spotless as possible. With the dizzy clean, it's easiest to service the distributor with it safely clamped in a vice. Use soft jaws, or some cardboard at the very least, so you don't damage the distributor body. Use a flat bladed screwdriver and remove the points from the distributor baseplate. The screw should be pretty tight, so make sure to have a well-fitting screwdriver, or you will likely round it off. With the screw loosened, take some long nose pliers and remove the wire from the spade terminal on the condenser. With the points removed, you can now remove the condenser. The condenser can break down internally with age and cause rough running; the car just loses power, then won't start, similar to running out of fuel. It's a basic service item and should be replaced as a matter of course, they aren't expensive. There are several different condensers for different years of vehicle, with different shape bungs. Ours was a 1968, so is a round bung, which goes into the distributor from underneath. This can be removed with long nose pliers. On later models, you will need to remove the screw on the side of the distributor body first, before you can remove the clip and bung. Be careful with the small ground wire, which is attached to the back of this screw and runs into the distributor.

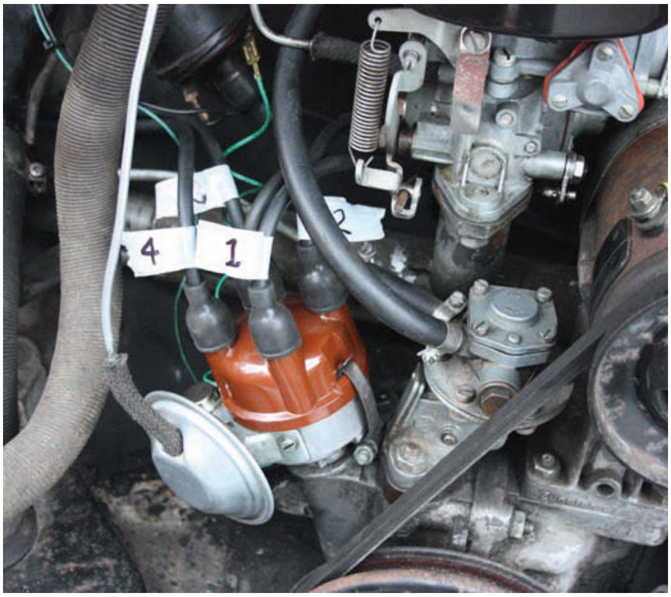
04 FIT NEW DIZZY PARTS With the distributor stripped of service items, you can now replace them, in the order that they were removed. Again, make sure to buy parts for your particular year of distributor. The contact breaker points change over the years too – ours were a two-piece affair. With the condenser bung inserted into the distributor and tightened up, you can screw the points to the distributor baseplate. Our two-piece ones needed to slide over the pin which is attached to the baseplate first and be secured with a washer and e-clip, but the one-piece points won't need this. Insert the screw into the baseplate and snug down, but don't tighten yet. The points gap should be open when one of the four cams of the distributor drive opens it; if you look at the distributor shaft the area that actuates the points is squared off. To check the points gap when open, simply rotate the shaft either with your fingers (distributor out of car) or turn the engine by hand (distributor in car) to open and close the points, then insert the correct feeler gauge to check the gap is correct (0.06" or 0.15mm). Tighten the screw as you do this, checking the gap again once the screw is tight. Make sure to put a small amount of white grease on the distributor cam, where it contacts the points. Finally, fit the new rotor arm; note that the earlier distributors have a shorter cap and thus a shorter rotor arm too.

➔



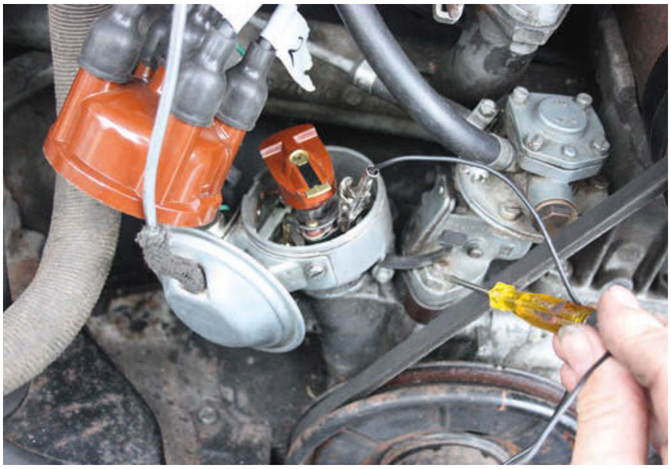
05

REFIT DISTRIBUTOR Slide the distributor back into the engine case and slowly turn the rotor arm as you put pressure on the top of the distributor body, so you can locate the offset distributor drive into the corresponding lugs inside the engine. With this done, you can push the distributor all the way home and tighten the 13mm nut, fixing the clamp to the engine if this is how you chose to remove it. If you chose to loosen the clamp with the 10mm nut and still need to reset the timing, then leave it loose for now. With the distributor refitted, you will need to plug the condenser wire onto the coil; this goes onto the negative side of the coil, which is the opposite side to the black wires running to the fuel solenoid and choke.



06

FIT NEW DISTRIBUTOR CAP AND LEADS If you haven't removed the old distributor cap and leads from the engine bay, you can do this now. The picture shows the sequence the leads go onto the distributor cap on an engine where the distributor drive has been fitted the correct way round. Number 1 plug lead always goes where there is a notch in the distributor body. You will need to route the leads around the inlet manifold and make sure they are secured to the fan housing with the correct clips, keeping them out of the way of the hot manifold when the engine is running. If you are unsure of which cylinder is which, you can peel back the seals on the engine bay side trays and the number for each cylinder is stamped into the cylinder head shroud tinware. Make sure the leads you are using have the rubber seals to seal against the tinware, as this is an important part of the engine cooling. Don't forget to fit the central high tension lead to the centre of the coil too.



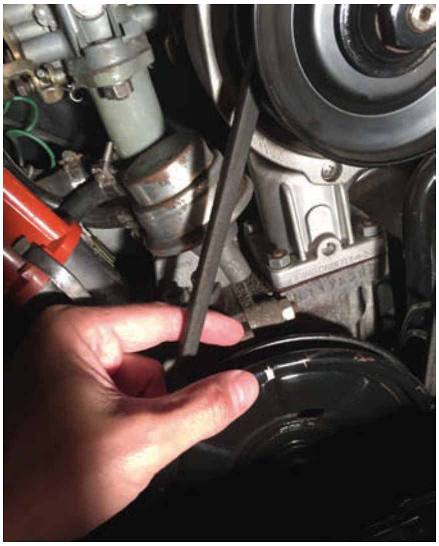
07

SET TIMING – STATIC With the engine off, remove the distributor cap and rotate the engine so that number 1 piston is in firing position. To do this, you need to line up the notch in the rotor arm with the notch in the distributor body and also line up the top dead centre (TDC) notch in the lower pulley with the split in the engine case halves. If the pulley has two notches, it is the right hand one, if it has three notches, it is the centre one. With the engine in number 1 firing position, loosen the 10mm distributor clamp nut, so you can easily rotate the distributor. Turn the ignition on, but do not attempt to start the engine. Connect the crocodile clip of a test lamp to the spade connector on your points inside the distributor. Put the prong end of your test lamp to ground – usually the M6 bolts on the heat riser, or another good earth point. Now rotate the distributor slowly until the test lamp goes out. Then rotate it slowly back until the light just comes on. Tighten the 10mm nut on the distributor clamp and the engine is now timed at TDC. This should be okay to get you started, but check the internet or a manual to see which timing setting your particular distributor needs and find someone with a strobe timing light to set it up correctly – most distributors are timed at a degree setting before or after TDC and if you have a 009 distributor it should be timed at 30-32° total advance at 3000rpm (usually somewhere between 5-10° before top dead centre (BTDC)). The 009 and single-vacuum distributors can be statically timed at 7.5° BTDC, but timing with a strobe light is recommended. If an electronic ignition system like Compu-Fire or Pertronix has been installed, the distributor must be timed with a strobe light.

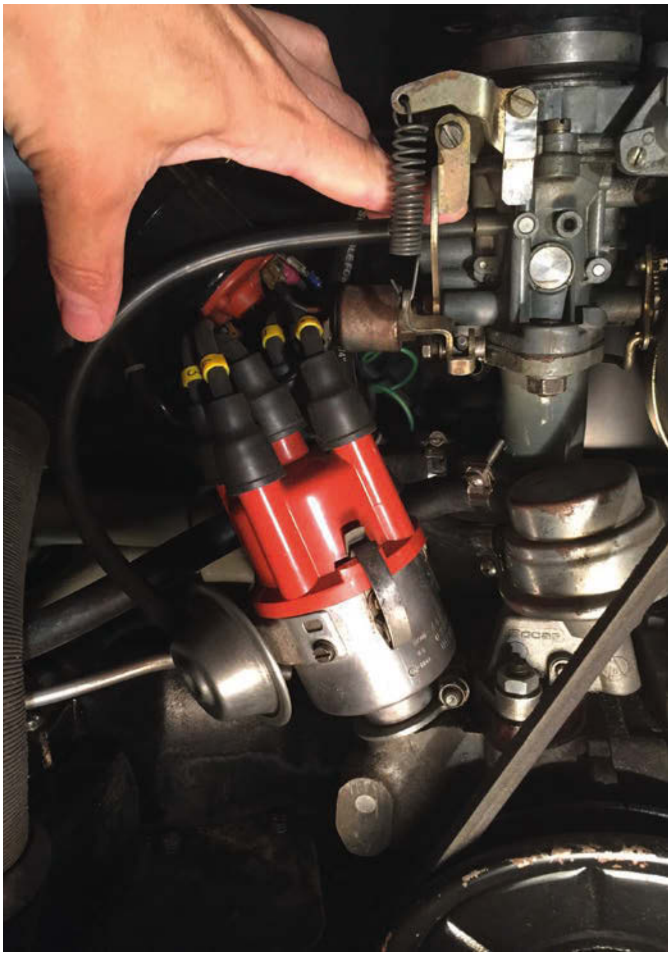
08

SET TIMING – TIMING LIGHT Before you can set the timing with a stroboscopic (strobe) light, you'll need to know the settings for your individual distributor and make a timing mark on the lower pulley. Below is a basic guide (thanks to www.vw-resource.com), but you can usually find the timing setting for your individual distributor by googling the part number with the word 'timing'.

- **Vacuum-advance only distributors:**



Mark the necessary timing mark with white paint so it can be picked up by the strobe



When timing a vacuum only distributor, the vacuum hoses must remain attached. However, they need to be plugged with other types of dizzy

From 1961 to 1971, Type 1 distributors were vacuum-advance only – they had no centrifugal advance. These distributors are timed at 7.5° BTDC; this point is found by measuring on the rim of the crankshaft pulley 11.5mm to the right of the TDC notch.

- **Dual-advance distributors:** From the TDC mark, measure on the rim of the pulley 7.6mm to the left from the TDC notch and mark with white paint; this is 5° after top dead centre (ATDC), the point at which the dual vacuum advance distributor is timed.
- **009 and SVDA distributors:** Measure on the rim of the crankcase pulley 11.5mm to the right of the TDC notch. This is 7.5° BTDC; mark this point with white paint. This is the point at which the centrifugal advance (009) and single-vacuum dual-advance (SVDA) distributors are preliminarily timed (the maximum advance at 3500rpm will be the final timing point for these distributors).

Maximum advance: From the TDC mark, measure on the rim of the crankcase pulley 46mm (for a 175mm diameter pulley) to the right of the TDC notch. This is 30° BTDC; mark this point also with white paint. This is the maximum advance point at 3500rpm, the timing point for 009 and SVDA distributors.

The procedure for using a stroboscopic timing light is as follows:

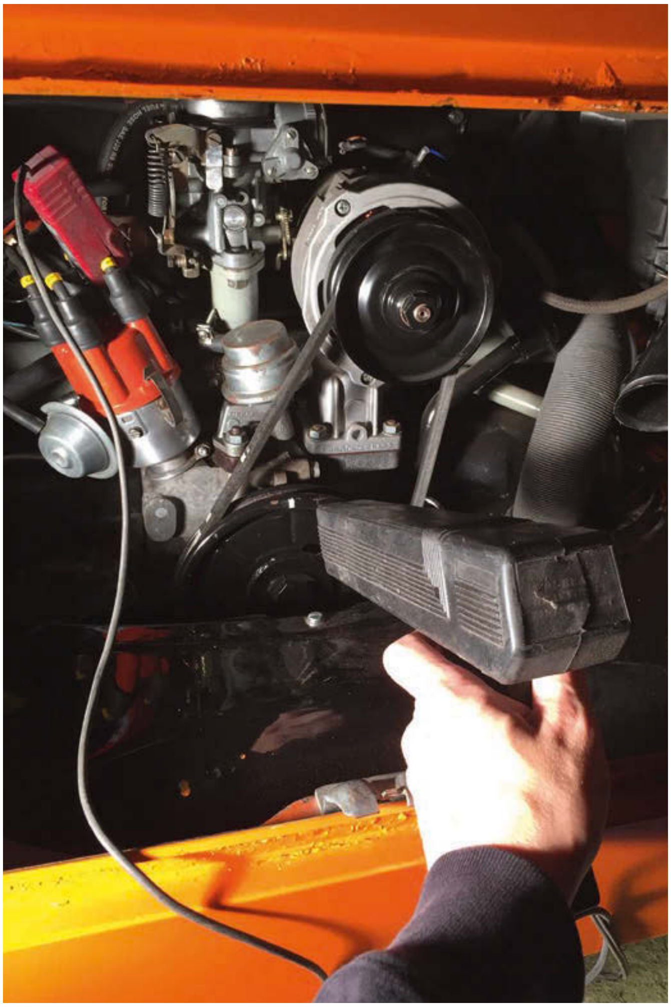
- Ignition timing must be set at idle, with the engine warm.
- When timing the vacuum-only distributor, the vacuum line(s) must be attached. The vacuum line on the single-vacuum dual advance (SVDA) distributors must be removed from the vacuum canister on the distributor and plugged to prevent air from being sucked into the carburettor during timing. For both the centrifugal-advance (009) and SVDA distributors – if there is a vacuum hose running from a port in the intake manifold under the carburettor up to the air cleaner, this hose must be removed and plugged as well, for the same reason. Be sure to plug it such that air will not be sucked into the intake manifold.

For these distributors, the advance timing is more important than the idle timing. Ideally it should be 28-30° advanced at 3500rpm, then should return to something close to 7.5° BTDC at idle (900rpm). The centrifugal-advance portions of these distributors vary – if the maximum advance is set to the correct 28-30° BTDC at 3500rpm, an idle timing in the range of 5-8° BTDC should result.

a. Set the handbrake firmly and block the wheels. Put the gearbox in neutral.
b. Make sure that the maximum advance timing mark (as determined above) is clearly visible on the crankshaft pulley (i.e. marked with white paint).
c. Attach the inductive pick-up clip on the timing light around the number 1 spark plug wire, close to the spark plug and away from the other spark plug wires to avoid interference. Observe the arrow on the clip pointing to the spark plug (if there is such an arrow).

Power to the strobe light is provided through the red crocodile clip. Attach it to a convenient power source; we use the terminal on the right side of the coil (the one with the wires to the automatic choke and idle solenoid – terminal 15). Alternatively (and perhaps more conveniently), you can use the positive terminal on the alternator.

With the timing light attached, start the engine and move the distributor until the timing mark you made earlier corresponds with the split in the crankcase. Once you are happy, carefully tighten the 10mm nut on the distributor clamp, being extremely careful if the engine is running, as the fan belt will be spinning very close to where you are working.



Static timing will get you going, but using a strobe lamp and doing it dynamically is usually best

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CADDY MK2

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2000, 55,000 Miles, £2,500 ONO. Colour concept. 1.4 TDI. One owner from new. Full service history. Recent new tyres. Timing belt and service. Original car. Excellent condition, viewing recommend. Please call 07565 512884, Wolcestershire.

VW TRANSPORTER

2007, 95,500 Miles, £10,495. MOT. Chrome side steps and nudge bar fly lined and painted. Full leather seat with arm rest. New VW sports line alloys. News pads and discs. Please call 07843 477711, Cornwall.

CAMPER VANS FOR SALE

CAMPERVAN

1972, £20,000 ono. Good condition. Some extras inc awning MoT till Dec 17. Garage maintained. Reg, UBK543K. Dorset. david.howe60@talktalk.net.

LATE BAY CAMPERVAN

1975, £24,000 ONO. Tax Exempt, 1.6 Litre engine, beautiful condition and great bodywork following restoration. 3/4 Rock & Roll bed. Lighting and AV setup throughout. Gas hob and sink, 3 Berth plus hammock for over front seats. Pop-up roof. 12 months MOT, leisure battery plus charging system. Please call 07538 163 882

T1 SPLIT WINDOW

£19,000. In Blue located in south of Spain sheet metal/paint: good. Motor: good. Seating: good. Interior: some details-matching numbers: good. Origin: Brazil (1973). Included: new battery 60 Ah, oil, European customs full documented (DUA), Spanish taxes (IVTM-2017), temporary Spanish plate, and insurance (third parties + assistance) until Mar-2018. If wanted to keep in Spain, I can add "Vehiculo historico plate" for extra +1000€. +34 654 33 54 69.

T2 CAMPERVAN

1972, £8,600. Blue, spent £3,000 on having the mechanical's overhauled. Fully rebuild 1600 engine. New fuel lines, brakes and servo, gearbox bushes, electronic ignition fitted. Refurbished interior. Will have 12 months MOT. Please call 07966 053895

T2 CROSSOVER EARLY BAY

1969, £35,000. California imported rust free. Fully restored 2011 owned since. Wax oiled. Summer miles winter stored in insulated garage. 1776 completely rebuilt motor machined heads 40 twin Webber carbs. Braided hoses, electronic ignition, stainless exhaust, oil cooler, custom Porsche front disks, new rear drums with servo, anti roll bar, empi or original wheels, halogen headlights. Durham. 07515 855472.

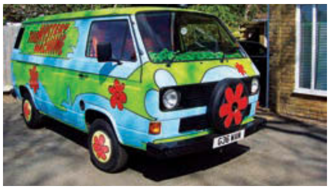
T25 WESTFALIA LHD

1987, 200,000 miles, £7,500. I imported the van from California in 2006. 2 litre petrol water cooled engine. Power steering, air conditioning. Engine reconditioned @150K. All original interior and trim in very good condition. Pop top roof. Rare slot in double bench seat converting it from a 5 to a 7 seater. Serviced by local VW specialist, FSH. West Yorkshire. 07875 299621.

T5.1 SWB CRAFTED VANS CONVERSION

2012, 61,000 Miles, £39,995. 140 High line, full genuine sports line styling, hilo roof, smart bed evolution 2, leather seats, Eberspächer heater, full insulation and dynamat, under chassis fresh and waste water and LPG. Staron work tops, alpine nav with focal audio system. Much more, call for full spec. 12 months MOT. Please call 07775696240 OR 07974660834

VOLKSWAGEN MYSTERY MACHINE



1989, £10,500 ono. Professionally converted 78PS panel van. Fitted out for fun or business. Sound and video. 1915cc petrol. New stainless steel exhaust. New tyres. Recent service. MOT October. Kent. 07721 942732.

VOLKSWAGEN SPLITSCREEN

1964, £30,000. LHD. Bare metal restoration, original beige grey over sealing wax red. Single units mev hob and sink. New headliner, insulation throughout. Fresh 1776cc engine, twin carbs, new ancillaries. 07764 857129

VW DOUBLE CAB PICKUP

1983, £9,100 ono. One owner from new, first class body work-spare engine. Partly restored. West Yorkshire. 07836 794083.

VW EARLY BAY CAMPER

1970, £14,995. LHD, full engine refit, rock & roll bed, many original features, converted bed in pop top, MoT May 2018, stored in garage. Swindon. 07917 830346.

VW T2 EARLY BAY WESTFALIA

1970, £29,995. California Import, left hand drive, full restoration summer 2014, great runner comes with MOT till September 2017, original Van with new canvas and extras. Guildford. 07500 777147.

VW T5 CAMPER LWB

2007, 220,000 miles, £13,500. 2 berth, Bebb Rock & Roll bed. Front captain's swivel seats. Smev 9322 hob. Re-sprayed Spanish green. DRL style headlights. New ABS control module. MoT December 2017. Illness forces sale. East Sussex. 07904 917389.

VW T5.1 TRANSPORTER 4 BERTH

22,000 miles, £37,995. T30/102 2.0 litre TDi. Cruise control, rear parking sensors, skyline roof, MOT compliant Rock & Roll bed, 18 inch white Audi rota-style wheels, double swivel front seat, can 1401 sink and gas hob, cold running water, indel B fridge/freezer, platinum leisure battery (A Rated), Evo-Design kitchen units, fully insulated and sound deadened. robertwoollven@outlook.com.

VW WESTFALIA ADVENTURE WAGON

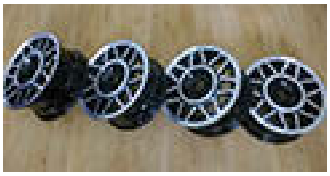
1969, £14,300 ono. LHD, Californian Import, 1.6, Rock & Roll bed, electric hook up, MOT, wax oiled, service history. Solid original bodywork, tax exempt. UK spec electric's, serviced by VW specialist. 07980 165243 / 01614 837405.

WESTFALIA SO67 CAMPMOBILE

1969, £19.950. LHD US import, ready to go! Fully wax oiled underside, 5 new tyres, 10 months MOT, Tax Exempt 07814 481400

PARTS & ACCESSORIES FOR SALE

1 SET OF MK2 VW SIROCCO RIMS



£580. Scala 14 inch 4 stud refurbished alloy wheels, diamond lip and face cut with black and in stunning condition, these alloys will fit mk1 golf. 07867840819

BEETLE PARTS

1969, £VARIOUS. Beetle right hand door slight rust, easy repair £65. Speedo in KPH £25. Manual fix your Volks Beetle 1st edition £25. Dinky small window £30. Please call 01843 897546.

GOLF MKT VARIOUS PARTS

£VARIOUS. Rear screen £30. Unused single wiper kit £30. Pair crystal H/Lamps £40. Golf MK polished ally, rocker cover plus chrome cap/bolts £50. Please call 01279 725455, Herts.

MK2 VW GOLF INTERIOR

£690. Old school classic, comes in grey with grey piping. 2 headrests, front and rare door cards, in very good condition, no wear on any of the bolsters, no rips or burn marks. This interior would be ideal for any project. 07879215057

PAIR OF VAG ROOF BARS

£30. Good condition, to fit Golf Mk II. Please call 01214 443877

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF 20V TURBO ENGINE

£POA. In good condition. Also Golf GTI engine. Ring for full details. Avon. 07510 171711.

VW GOLF GTI 1.8 ENGINE

£POA. In good condition. Bristol. 07502 032532.

VW GOLF MK 3 CABRIOLET BADGE

2000, £POA. Also 4 stud spare wheels. Staffs. 07967 486477.

VW LT DOORS

£80 EACH. Rust free condition. From late model offside/nearside. Please call 077523 12211, Berks.

LITERATURE & INFORMATION FOR SALE

COLLECTION OF CAR BOOKS

£POA. Manuals, handbook magazines. Please call 01507 610016, Lincs.

HAYNES CAR MAINTENANCE MANUALS

£POA. Large collection from 1950s-1960s. Most popular models. Will sell individually. Phone for further information. Derbyshire. 07976 266936.

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COBRA HIGH BACK RALLY SEAT

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CORGI 1137 FORD

£65.00 Inc P+P. Excellent & mint condition in original box with mechanic figure box end flaps missing. Please call 07786385415

CORGI GIFT SET

£40.00 inc P+P. 12 chipper fields crane truck + circus cage trailer with lions excellent condition very minor paint chips. Please call 07786385415

EPCO ENGINE CRANE

£175. On wheels, new oil seals fitted. Reconditioned totally, jib extends forwards, 2.5 tons. Delivered 50 mile radius, cost of diesel or you can collect. Very heavy steel well, suit restorer. Staffs. 01543 683891.

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2017 VW T6 Danbury Surf, 0 miles, 2.0 diesel engine, 2 burner gas hob, fridge freezer, stainless steel sink with electrically pumped water, camping leisure battery, 240v mains hook up, climatic air conditioning, front & rear parking sensors and much more, **£43,261.** Ref: 2997. .

2017 VW T6 Danbury Royale, 0 miles, 2.0 diesel engine, 2 burner gas hob, fridge freezer, stainless steel sink with electrically pumped water, camping leisure battery, 240v mains hook up, rear parking sensors & rear parking camera, comfort pack, privacy glass, driver & passenger armrests, anti-theft alarm and cab carpet, **£56,039.** Ref: 2889.

2005 VW T2 Danbury Rio, 15,040 miles, 1.6 air-cooled petrol engine, 2 burner gas hob, grill and oven, fridge/freezer, sink, leisure battery, 240v mains hook up, underseal anti-corrosion treatment, heated windscreen, heated rear window, CD radio, raising roof, roof bed to make 4 berth, lowered suspension and BRM-style alloy wheels and much more, **£24,995.** Ref: 848K.

2014 VW T2 Danbury Diamond 5 seat SE, 51,815 miles, 1.4 water-cooled petrol engine, 2 burner hob, grill, sink, fridge/freezer, leisure battery, 240v mains hook up, CD radio, raising roof and roof-bed to make 4 berth & much more. Ref: HEV.

2009 VW T2 Danbury Diamond 5 Seat Classic, 48,643 miles, 1.4 air-cooled petrol engine, 2 burner hob, grill, sink, fridge freezer, leisure battery, 240v mains hook up, CD radio with iPod connectivity, raising roof, roof bed to make 4 berth, alloy wheels & much more. **£30,995.** Ref: ACY.

1972 VW T2, 101,886 miles, 1.6 air-cooled engine, authentic RHD Westfalia Conversion, fantastic condition throughout. Raising roof w roof-bed, sink & 4 belted seats. **£29,995.** Ref: 327k.

2013 VW T2 Danbury Diamond, 27,272 miles, 1.4 water-cooled petrol engine, 2 burner gas hob, grill and oven, fridge/freezer, sink, leisure battery, 240v mains hook up, underseal anti-corrosion treatment, heated windscreen, heated rear window, CD radio, raising roof and much more, **£37,845.** Ref: 2826.

2017 VW T6 Royale, 0 miles, 2.0 diesel (150ps) DSG automatic transmission, long wheelbase, Walnut units, Light Wood floor, standard VW upholstery, rear parking sensors & camera, comfort pack, privacy glass, driver & passenger armrests, anti-theft alarm and cab carpet and much more, **£50,579.** Ref: 3043.

2002 VW T2 Danbury Rio 4 Seat Classic, 21,036 miles, 1.4 air-cooled engine, 2 burner gas hob, gas grill, fridge freezer, sink, leisure battery, mains hook up, heated windscreens, CD radio, extra side table, buddy seat & much more. Only **£21,995.** Ref: LLR.

2017 VW T6 Active, 19,000miles, 2.0 diesel, manual transmission, tailgate rear door, double cab front seat, air conditioning, colour-coded bumpers, rear-parking sensors, cruise control, alloy wheels, leather steering wheel, metallic paint, BluMotion technology and much more. **Only £42,995.** Ref: LC16 RFE

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Fit for a king (and Queen)

Robin Wager recalls a right regal form of transport used by the Belgian royal family

What do you think?

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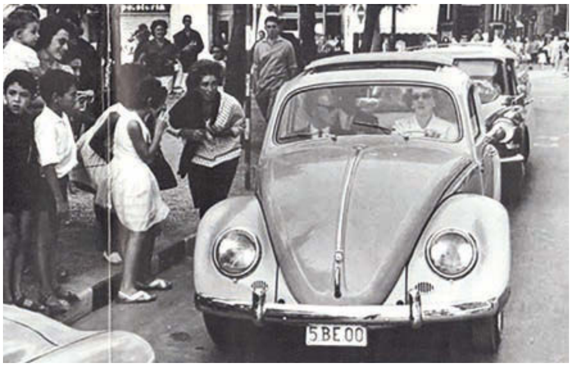
Whenever we think of the British royal family travelling around on ceremonial duties, it's impossible to imagine them in anything other than one of the superior (and sometimes rather magnificent) state coaches – or, at least, one of the Rolls-Royce or Bentley models from the royal stable. Even during informal times, it's likely to be a posh, new, suitably sombre Range Rover.

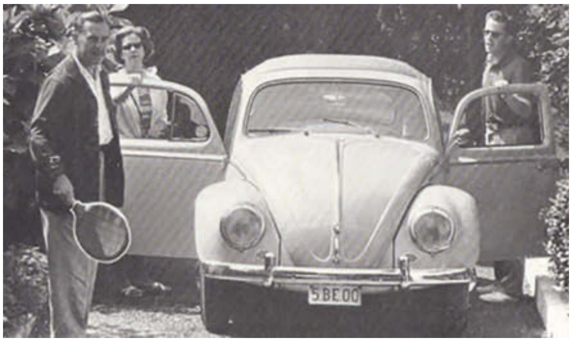
I was looking back recently at the 1962 volume of *Safer Motoring* magazine, and when I got to the October issue I was reacquainted with a story that founding editor Bob Wyse had dug out from somewhere, concerning the royal family of Belgium. The fact that it included some very good pictures made it an excellent feature for the magazine, which was then only in its first full year of publication.

"It stretches the imagination to consider a lowly Beetle being pressed into royal service in Britain"



^ Belgium's King and Queen being recognised by locals during a trip into San Sebastian, Spain

v Anyone for tennis, or a bit of Bug swatting?



Over in Belgium, on state occasions King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola were accustomed to their chauffeur-driven, top-of-the-range Mercedes limo for getting around. However, it seems that when they wanted to get away from the routine of royal duties for a while, the King and Queen liked nothing better than a jaunt in their private VW Beetle. And 5.BE.00 was a humble 1200, too, we can assume, unless HRH had enlisted the services of one of the tuning houses, which somehow I doubt.

v No wonder the King's smiling, especially now the ragtop roof's been pulled back

v The Queen bags the driving seat this time…

Ab Fab

The feature showed them on a trip to north-east Spain, where Fabiola's mother owned a property at Zarautz, the royal couple frequently being spotted in the company of the Queen's sister, her brother-in-law and nephews. It was usually Queen Fabiola who was seen at the wheel of the Beetle, where she was apparently quickly recognised and acclaimed by local children. Sometimes the royal couple set off together on a private fishing trip from the fishermen's village of Lagartera. But for much of the time the King played tennis with his brother-in-law, while the Queen sat in the shade with her sister and looked on.

Britain's Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip have certainly been known to drive rather lowlier marques than the usual Rolls and Bentleys – I seem to recall seeing the Queen driving a Triumph and a Rover some years ago, as well as a Land Rover. The Duke of Edinburgh also had his favourite sporty cars, and I believe princes William and Harry each had a Golf GTi as teenagers.

It stretches the imagination too far to consider a lowly Beetle being pressed into royal service in Britain. On the other hand, perhaps we should remind ourselves that, somewhat ironically, Rolls-Royce is now owned by BMW, and Bentley by Volkswagen… ■

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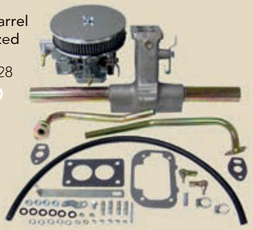

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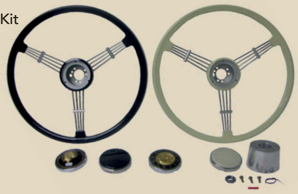

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